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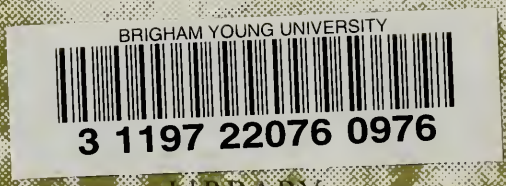

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SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAGAZINE,

AND

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE YEAR 1868.

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THE WESLEYAN

SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAGAZINE,

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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

NEW-YEAR'S GIFTS AND WISHES.

THE custom of making presents and expressing good wishes at the beginning of the year, has come down to us from very ancient times. It was practised by the Romans to a considerable extent, and was associated by them with many superstitious observances. Their usual presents were figs and dates, covered with leaf-gold, and sent by clients to their patrons, together with pieces of money which were spent in purchasing statues of deities. Fosbrooke describes an *amphora*, or ancient Roman jar, on which was an inscription denoting it to be a New-Year's gift from the potters to their patroness. Another piece of Roman pottery had the words of our familiar wish upon it, in Latin,—"A happy New Year to you!" Upon another was found an inscription in which a person wishes the same for himself and his son. Caylus, who mentions the foregoing, also describes three medallions bearing the laurel-leaf, fig, and date, and an inscription wishing a happy New Year to the Emperor. In their celebration of the New Year, however, the heathen Romans engaged in many idolatrous, impure, and riotous practices; and in consequence of this, the early Christians observed its first day as a solemn fast, being forbidden, under penalty of anathema and excommunication, to keep it as a feast-day and send abroad gifts upon it. The motive which prompted this prohibition was, undoubtedly, wise and good; it shows a commendable anxiety to "be separate" from the idolaters, and to "touch not" their "unclean things." But when the old Paganism ceased to prevail, and Christianity had spread over Europe, the custom of "gifts" and "wishes" was revived, if without all the corrupt accessories of earlier times, yet still, with too much of revelry. In Brand's "Antiquities" is given the following translation by

Barnabe Googe, of "what relates to New Year's day in Naogeorgus; better known by the name of 'The Popish Kingdom,'" A.D. 1570:—

> "The next to this is New Yeare's day, whereon to every frende
> They costly presents in do bring, and Newe Yeare's gifts do sende.
> These giftes the husband gives his wife, and father eke the child,
> And maister on his men bestowes the like, with favour milde;
> And good beginning of the yeare they wishe and wishe againe,
> According to the auncient guise of heathen people vaine.
> These eight days no man doth require his dettes of any man,
> Their tables they do furnish out with all the meate they can." &c. &c.

Some of our monarchs used to *expect* these gifts from their subjects: Henry III. is said to have *extorted* them; and the immense wardrobe of Queen Elizabeth is supposed to have been formed, in great part, from presents of this kind made to her by her nobility. Among the humbler classes of society, the custom assumed various forms. Bourne says,—"If I send a New-Year's gift to my friend, it shall be a token of my friendship; if to my benefactor, a token of my gratitude; if to the poor, which, at this season, must never be forgot, it shall be to make their hearts sing with joy, and give praise and adoration to the Giver." These generous resolutions show how possible it is to infuse a thoroughly Christian spirit into a practice which heathenism handed down to us. Nothing is to be despised which tells of, and tends to nourish, kindly feeling between man and man, and an anxiety for each other's welfare. Gifts,—however trifling, and wishes,—no matter what the origin of the form of words in which they are uttered, if they are but genuine expressions of goodwill, can scarcely fail to be acceptable; and accordingly, with all sincerity and earnestness we wish to all our readers—

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As we do so, we congratulate them on being spared to see it; and ask them to join us in hearty thanksgiving, for the benefit, to Him in "whose hands" our "breath is," and to resolve anew to glorify Him in the loving service of consecrated lives. Let us all strive to make it a "New Year" indeed; not only accepting and noting it as a new period of life, but setting out upon it with prayers and purposes calculated to make it a "year" of personal religion, which shall be "new" in the degree of its vigour and enjoyment, and of duty,—"new" in the measure of its wise and loving earnestness. Each of us can make it "new," by striving to be holier than we have ever been before, doing all our work better

than it has ever been done, and being more useful than we have hitherto been. If this be so, the "New Year" will assuredly be "happy" also, but not otherwise.

Let us be on our guard against a vague and vain hope that the New Year will be better and happier than the old one, merely because it is new. Such a delusion as this it is easy to cherish, but it is very hurtful. Some time ago the "Times" newspaper had this sentence,—"The chapter of accidents is the Bible of the fool." Nothing can be more true. If any one who has been selfish, proud, passionate, unbelieving, or unsuccessful in 1867, hopes to be loving, humble, meek, believing, and successful in 1868, merely because of the probable difference which there may be between the circumstances of the one year and of the other, he is only flattering himself with a most groundless expectation. New years do not make new men. Old years hand on character and habits into new ones, unless new prayers bring down new measures of the Holy Spirit's grace to renew and strengthen the heart, and purify the life; and unless new resolves, promptly acted on, give a new turn to conduct.

If we would so endorse the good wishes of our friends as to ensure that the year shall be a "new" one in the prosperity of religion in our own souls, we shall do well to begin it with a careful scrutiny of ourselves and our "ways." We should seek out the kinds and causes of past failure and defect; search for and take note of all weak places in our character, those points at which Satan has assailed us with most easy and frequent success, and then watch them with all care, praying for special grace to make us "strong in the Lord" in all those respects in which we are most weak in ourselves. Let us more diligently use all the means of grace, private and social; considering whether some are not neglected in which we might engage with profit, and whether those to which we are accustomed might not be made to yield more edifying results. We shall do well to endeavour more heartily, simply, and fully to believe the Gospel; and to look for all the blessings of that complete salvation which it promises, with a prompt and firm faith in Christ.

So, too, in relation to all our Christian work, especially in the Sunday-school, if we sincerely desire the year to be a "new" and "happy" one in its success, we shall follow up the wish by thoughtful, earnest, appropriate, and immediate effort to make it so. It will be well to take pains first to find out in what direction improvement is needed and possible; to examine ourselves as to the aim and manner in which we have undertaken our work,—that, if the

aim be found too low, we may at once make it a higher one; if the manner be faulty, we may at once amend it; resolved by God's help to master all difficulties, and to labour expectantly for the thorough instruction and early conversion of all the scholars whom we have under our care.

Our New-Year's "wish" for our readers we shall endeavour, in these and similar respects, to sustain and follow up during the year by seeking to fill our pages with helpful and stimulating articles, which shall be worthy of their careful study and use. We labour from month to month with an anxious desire to furnish—at the lowest practicable price—as much, as varied, and as efficient assistance as possible to those who toil for the religious education of the young. We hope our efforts are acceptable, and have good reason to believe them to be so; at the same time, more active exertions, on the part of our subscribers and readers, for the wider circulation of this Magazine, would greatly encourage us. Will our friends aim at this?

THE WORK OF THE PRESENT.

One secret of success, in almost every line of action, lies in the little word NOW. A good man who resolves to do his work to-morrow, seldom sees the day; and many a bad man who says he will call for Christ "at a more convenient season," enjoys neither the season nor Christ. We must "choose this day whom we will serve;" and are expressly told, that "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

I am afraid that many of our Sunday-school teachers lose sight of the importance of present blessings, as well as of the glorious fact that they are attainable. They resolve that some day they will set to work "in right good earnest;" and labour, not so much with the object of imparting mere instruction to the children, as of leading them to Christ, and endeavouring to secure the salvation of their souls. "Only wait a few Sundays longer," say they; "we want this book, this chapter, or that series of lessons finished, and then we will commence seriously to work for the salvation of our scholars." Now, are we justified in giving way to procrastination in a good cause? Why should that "thief of time" pilfer our best moments, and lead us to squander them in idleness?

One often-enforced reason why we should work *now* for the attainment of all those results which we desire, but do not labour to secure, is, that the postponement of that work involves the awful possibility of never having the opportunity to do it at all; and that, from many causes. We may not live, or we may be removed by Providence far away from those whom we intended to profit; or *they* may not live until we consider it time to fulfil our promises. And think for a moment of the awful pangs which an upbraiding conscience will inflict upon your mind; realize, if you can, the abiding mental anguish which will be endured, if, while you have the opportunity of speaking a word, in the name of Jesus, to a perishing soul, you neglect to do so, excusing yourself

with the plea that you have no time then, or, that another time will do as well, and a few hours afterwards find that an enemy, which will wait for no man, when he has his commission in his hand, has stepped in before you, and snatched away the person upon whom you had only spent your worthless promises.

Ah! my dear fellow-workers, I am now speaking from poignant experience. Allow me to refer to the circumstance. A few years ago there was a revival in a town in the North of England. The place was divided into small districts for the purpose of a house-to-house canvass; so that everybody might receive a personal invitation to the services. One district was taken by two individuals, who, in the course of their canvass, found themselves in a room scantily and poorly furnished, in which, on a bed, lay a poor woman, grown old and feeble, and apparently suffering from, not only hunger and want, as her pinched-up features testified, but also from disease. She slightly turned her head as the visiters entered the room. One of them explained their mission; and, seeing that the possibility of her attending chapel was out of the question, offered to leave her a tract. She said she did not want it, as she could not read. He said, "But perhaps you can get some friend to read it to you." She answered that she had no friend who could read, and did not care to have it read at all. He then asked how it was with her soul, when she impatiently replied, "I do not want to hear anything about my soul!" Leaving the tract, with a word or two of exhortation, they went away. This was, under the circumstances, and for the moment, as much, perhaps, as they could be expected to do; but was not this a case for some special effort? Here was a poor woman, seemingly on the verge of another world, sick in body and soul; all alone in two respects; for there seemed no earthly friend near to comfort, and no Saviour to cheer her heart in her last moments. Should not some time have been devoted to the welfare of this wretched woman's soul? The case demanded attention, but perhaps there was the ever-ready and pernicious excuse—want of time. The saddest part of the history is yet to be told, and it comes with sharp pangs of remorse to my heart. The next day, only seventeen hours after the above occurrence, the room in which that miserable woman lay, from some cause or other, was set on fire, and was soon enwrapped in flames. The cry was raised,—"Where is the old woman?" No voice responded. When the fire was extinguished, the people entered the room as well as they could: everything in it was burnt, and where was *she?* My heart sickens as I think of it! In a small, low cupboard, on one side of the fireplace, were found the charred remains of what once had been a woman. The anguish and sorrow of the two visiters, when the news of the awful end of that poor woman reached them, none can tell. The writer *knows* what he felt, (for he was one of them,) but he cannot *describe* his feelings. We had every reason to think that she was unprepared for death when the hurried summons came. Might it not have been otherwise if we had spent some time in directing her to Jesus, and teaching her the way of salvation? If so, the lesson taught is clear, without any further comment. O! let us give heed to the warning voices of such occurrences as these, and endeavour to "be wise to-day," knowing that "'tis madness to defer."

I think I hear some one saying, "Well, I admit the force of all you have said: I know well enough that it is best to work when opportunity offers; why do you make so much

ado about it?" Allow me to ask you, Do you stop there? and, if so, why? We may presume that almost all "*know* well enough" that they ought to labour for eternity *now*, but—do they *do* it? That is the question. Let our watchword be, *know* and DO!

Another reason, in support of my proposition, is, that on our labours now in the Sunday-school, the future position of our section of the Church, in a great measure, depends. We want our scholars soundly converted, and to become men of God, and thorough Wesleyan Methodists. We ought to instruct them more carefully in the leading principles of Methodism. There are some Wesleyan Methodists who, if asked by an outsider why they are such, would scarcely know what answer to give. They might say that they were made very happy, and got much good to their souls by being Wesleyans; but that would not satisfy an interrogator who might want to know on what ecclesiastical grounds a Wesleyan preferred the church with which he had associated himself. Now, the Wesleyan Sunday-school teacher should endeavour to instil into the minds of his scholars the principles of Wesleyan Methodism, and reasons why they would do well to be Methodists.

Let those teachers who are not fully informed on this important subject, become so. And why? For this reason, among others, that many who are now scholars in our Sunday-schools will have to take no slight part in the conflict of opinion and practice which already disturbs the churches, and threatens to become more severe and decisive. Methodist teachers ought to do all they can to prepare and predispose young people to take the right side; and, as Methodists, to uphold both those doctrines of Christianity which we know to be so true and precious, and that system of ecclesiastical polity, mutual intercourse, and of diligent labour which has heretofore produced, under God, such beneficial results.

Who will not, then, set to work afresh for Methodism and for Christ? Let us shake off the shackles of that curse of our day—indifference; and awake from our lethargy, from our cold, selfish, drowsiness; *awake* to *live; live* to *work;* and *work* that perishing *souls may be saved.*

O! fellow-workers! let us through the year on which we have now entered, fully—not partially—dedicate ourselves, body and soul, to this labour in the Gospel. We may fancy that, if *we* do not do it, somebody else will; but that is one of the "wiles of the devil." It may be reasonably presumed that another person will not do the work that we neglect, in the same way, or with the same result or success with ourselves; besides, there is a special satisfaction arising from seeing the work prospering in our *own* hands. And, if we want to see it prosper, we must work heartily, seriously, and determinedly, *now*, trusting in the Triune God for success and benediction.

G. B.

SEVEN RULES FOR A TEACHER.

1. NEVER attempt to teach what you do not understand.
2. Never tell a child what he can tell you.
3. Never give information without asking for it again.
4. Never use a hard word, without explaining it, and never use one that does not convey a meaning to the child.
5. Never begin a lesson without having a clear view of its end.
6. Never give an unnecessary command, nor one you cannot expect to be obeyed.
7. Never permit a child to remain in the class without giving him something to do, and a motive for doing it.

—*J. G. Fitch.*

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

"TEACHER SAYS, GOD SEES ME EVERYWHERE."

I FEAR that we Sunday-school teachers are not always sufficiently impressed with the real practical usefulness of the lessons imparted by us to our classes. We too often repeat important truths in an indifferent, cold way; simply as a part of our duty, and not with a burning desire that they may influence the words, actions, and lives of the children. If we, who profess to be walking in the path of Christian duty, and to have happily experienced the pleasures of the Christian life, speak of, and teach, such matters carelessly, how can we expect from our little hearers either the interest, or the earnestness, without which the truths we inculcate cannot be understood, and will not be practised? O for a more careful and prayerful scattering of the seed in the hearts of our scholars, that there may be more of the fruit of our teaching in their everyday life! Children's hearts are very tender, very impressible either for good or for evil. Let us, then, endeavour to guide them aright; let our teaching, both in our words and in our actions, be such as to reflect credit on our profession, and glorify our own heavenly Teacher.

The above remarks were suggested to my mind by a little incident, the relation of which, I hope, may prove as interesting and useful to others as the sight of it was to myself. I was in Liverpool for the first time, some time since, and made the best use I could of my eyes and ears. Among other places, I went to the "market;" and was for some time almost bewildered by the strange medley of people, stalls, flowers, fruit, meat, and vegetables. After a few minutes, however, I became accustomed to the noise, and was beginning to feel tired of the place, when my attention was attracted by a little ragged girl, who was walking about in a listless manner without, as I thought, object or interest in anything. She was a very tiny child, with a thin, pale face, and unnaturally large eyes, having that wistful, hungry glare in them which is only seen in the very poor. Her dress was torn and dirty, and altogether she was a very pitiable object to look upon: one that made me feel almost ashamed to be so well-dressed and comfortable. I was led to watch her, by seeing her suddenly stoop down, pick up a lovely yellow pear, which I saw fall from a stall near which she stood, and, hiding it in her dress, hurry off in another direction. I followed her quickly, without her perceiving me, for I wanted to see what she would do. She ran on a little way, and then, stopping suddenly, stood with her eyes fixed, evidently in deep thought; then she took the pear in her hand, (for she was out of the owner's sight,) and looked at it with such longing eyes, that she nearly drew tears out of mine. She then wiped it carefully with her dress, and again held it up admiringly. She sighed, ran back a few paces, (as though to return it,) then retracing her steps, she again stood still, and, hiding the pear once more, seemed to feel the temptation to be too great for her childish nature to resist. I, too, stood still near her, but not where she could see me.

I watched her with breathless anxiety. Forgetting myself and my surroundings, I lost sight of the busy crowd of purchasers; noticed not the tempting wares nor their plausible venders; all my attention was centred in that spot, where I knew one of the most critical events in human life was transpiring,—the conflict between good and evil in the soul.

I saw the little emaciated form, with her scanty dress grasped closely in her tiny hands, the luscious pear being hidden in its folds; I saw the wavering glance, the uncertain expression on her pale face; then, too, imagination planted on either side of her the conflicting powers. I saw, on one side, the Arch-deceiver, and heard his insidious suggestion: "How sweet it must be, and you are so thirsty; I'd eat it!" And on the other the white-robed form of some good angel, with clear voice, uttering the plain truth, "It will be a sin; don't do it!"

The child shuddered; the conflict was over. She loosened her grasp of her dress; the beautiful pear was held in her open hand; she looked neither to the right nor left, but went straight to the stall, and, touching the owner's elbow, held it up, with her face flushed with the excitement of her victory, and her voice ringing with a consciousness of right-doing, as she said, "This pear fell from your stall; take it."

The woman took it without comment, for she had not seen the temptation endured, the struggle and the victory achieved by that little heroine; but when that pear was returned to its owner, methinks there was joy in heaven over the victory of that little soldier of Christ.

She was walking quickly away; but I went up to her, and, laying my hand on her shoulder, arrested her attention. She seemed frightened at first; but soon got over that, when she saw that I did not look cross at her.

"Child," I said, "why did you hide that pear, and run away with it?"

"O, Ma'am, I've given it back!"

"Yes, I know; but why did you take it at all?"

"I couldn't help it, indeed, Ma'am; it looked so very ripe."

"Well, then, child, why did you not eat it?"

"O, Ma'am," she answered, her eyes full of tears, and her lips quivering, "it would be stealing; and teacher says God sees me everywhere!"

I spoke a few words to her, and then asked her what Sunday-school she went to. "Brunswick Chapel" was the answer; and her name, "B—— C——."

If this should meet the eyes of her teacher, surely she will thank God for this fruit of her labour of love.

Sunday-school teachers! Are you cast down, or discouraged? Do you sometimes think it no use to teach the children, feeling sure they don't remember anything you say? "O ye of little faith," here is a reproof,—here is encouragement for you: "*Teacher says God sees me everywhere!*"

Perhaps those words were spoken by a teacher who felt her own weakness, and had as little faith in the child's appreciation of the lesson taught as you have; yet see the result of her teaching,—a soul kept back from sin! Take courage, then. You feel your responsibility deeply, perhaps. Well, to teach and care for seven or eight little ones so that they may bring forth fruit to the glory of God, is a great trust; but the Master who confided it to you is almighty and omnipresent, and He will help you. If you carefully sow good, sound seed in those children's hearts,—not chance-grains merely, picked up whilst in the school, but seed carefully chosen during the six days of the week,—if you water that grain with earnest and believing prayer,—you may leave the rest of the work to God: He will give "the increase." Let us do our duty, not lazily or indifferently, but with true earnestness, and a real interest in the salvation of our scholars' souls, and we shall find that there will not be any cause for discouragement in the result of our labours.

M. E. Humphreys.

THE SCRIPTURE-TREASURY.

PARAPHRASES OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

I. BY BERNARD, ABBOT OF CLAIRVAUX IN 1120.

"*Our Father,*"—
By right of creation,
By merit of mercy,
By bountiful Providence.

"*Which art in heaven,*"—
The seat of Thy Majesty,
The home of Thy children,
The kingdom of bliss.

"*Hallowed be Thy name,*"—
By the thoughts of our hearts,
By the words of our mouths,
By the works of our hands.

"*Thy kingdom come,*"—
Of grace to inspire us,
Of power to defend us,
Of glory to crown us.

"*Thy will be done,*"—
In weal, and in woe,
In fulness, and want,
In life, and in death.

"*In earth as in heaven,*"—
In us as in angels,
Willingly, readily, faithfully,
Without murmur, let, deceit.

"*Give us this day our daily bread,*"—
For the nourishing of our bodies,
For the feeding of our souls,
For the relief of our necessities.

"*And forgive us our debts,*"—
Whereby Thou art dishonoured,
Our neighbours wronged,
Ourselves endangered.

"*As we forgive our debtors,*"—
Who have hurt us in our bodies,
Hindered us in our goods,
Wronged us in our good name.

"*Lead us not into temptation,*"—
Of the wicked world,
Of the enticing flesh,
Of the envious devil.

"*But deliver us from evil,*"—
Forgive that is past,
Reprove that is present,
Prevent what is to come.

"*For Thine is the kingdom,*"—
To rule and to govern all,
To command to do all,
In all, by all, all in all.

"*Now and for ever,*"—
At this present;
In this world;
In the world to come.

"*Amen,*"—
As Thou sayest, so is it.
As Thou promisest, it shall be.
As we pray, so be it, Lord.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

HOW ONE SENTENCE OF A SERMON PREVENTED SUICIDE.

Dr. Marsh, during his ministry at St. Lawrence, preached a course of sermons on the Commandments. It happened once that, owing to heavy rain, his congregation consisted only of the boys of the National School. The subject for that morning, "Thou shalt do no murder," the preacher felt to be most unsuited to his audience; but, as it came in the natural order, he proceeded with it. One passage in the sermon had reference to the crime of suicide, and contained the following sentence: "If any man, in the full possession of his senses, take away his own life, his last act is an act of sin."

Many years passed away, and Dr. Marsh was walking in the streets of Weymouth, when he was stopped by a man of respectable appearance, who looked earnestly in his face for a

moment, and then said, "Thank you, and bless you, Sir, for saving my life."

"I think there must be some mistake," he replied, "for I do not remember having ever seen you before."

"But I have seen *you*," said the stranger, "and never can forget you. I was one of the boys in the National School at Reading, and heard you preach on the sixth Commandment. A single sentence of that sermon was all that remained in my mind. I commenced business in this town; but, after some years of prosperity, I was brought, owing to unfortunate circumstances, to the brink of ruin. In my despair I resolved to drown myself; but, as I stood on the breakwater, about to throw myself into the sea, the words which I had heard fifteen years before, 'If any man, in the full possession of his senses, take away his own life, his last act is an act of sin,' flashed upon my memory, and with all my heart I said, 'By the help of God, *my* last act shall not be an act of sin.' I returned to my home, and found comfort in the Bible and in prayer, and that evening I heard a sermon in one of the churches, which led me to seek and find peace with God. The next day's post brought me a letter from an uncle, enclosing a cheque for my present relief, and from that time my circumstances gradually improved until they became prosperous, as they have continued to this time. This has been a great mercy; but the salvation of my soul, when I was on the brink of destroying it for ever, is infinitely greater, and I owe it, under God, to you."

A COLPORTEUR'S GIFT TO A SOLDIER.

A REGIMENT of French soldiers, on their march to the Crimea, halted for some days at Toulon. While there, a colporteur came among them. A young soldier, pretending to be much moved by the good man's exhortations, asked for a copy of the New Testament, which was given to him. The soldier and his comrades roared with laughter, telling the colporteur that it was all a joke; but the soldier refused to return the Book, saying, "It would do to light his pipe with." The colporteur replied, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Fifteen months after, the same colporteur stopped for a night at an inn more than three hundred miles from Toulon. The landlady was in great distress, having just lost her son, of whom she spoke in terms of most tender affection. Having conversed with her for a few moments, she brought a little Book, which her deceased son had left to her as his precious legacy.

It was much mutilated, many pages having been torn out; but on the inside of the cover, in large letters, was the following inscription:—"Received at Toulon, on the ——, 1855. Despised at first, and badly used; but afterwards read, believed, and made the instrument of my salvation.—J. L., Fusilier of the 4th Company of the — Regiment of the Line."

It was plain that the young soldier had made use of the missing leaves to light his pipe, as he had boasted he should; but, as he related to his mother, this work of destruction was stopped on the evening before a battle, in which his regiment was to occupy the perilous post of the advanced guard. He stated that at this juncture serious thoughts came into his mind in a very strange manner; and the words of the man from whom he had by deception obtained the Book, came suddenly to his recollection, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" "If," said he to himself, "I should fall into His hands!"

This thought haunted him, he said, without intermission, the whole of the night; and, as soon as it became light

in the morning, he took from his knapsack the Book which appeared to have become his accuser. The verses which he read in the dim grey light of that morning were brought home to his heart by the Holy Spirit. In the battle which ensued he was severely wounded; but "old things had passed away," and he now realized the truth of the faithful saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

He was brought back to his home about six weeks before the visit of the colporteur. The mutilated Testament was scarcely ever out of his hand. To his very last breath he ceased not to exhort his mother and friends to accept God's offered mercy in Jesus, and not to run the risk of falling, in an unconverted state, "into the hands of the living God."

ORIGINAL POETRY.

A WINTER SKETCH.

How beautiful this winter-morning scene,
  This white-robed landscape, opening to our gaze:
Smooth snow-clad valleys brightly wind between
  The hoary hills o'ertopp'd with crimson haze;
  From which the blushing sun askance surveys
A strangely spotless world, all silent and serene.

O'er copse and grove fair foliage is flung,
  As if some fabled nymph, in the long night,
Each twig and branching spray had richly hung
  With feathery frost-wreaths, sparkling pearly white:
  Scarce wore the woodlands an attire so bright
When summer warblers gay in summer greenery sung.

The ice-bound brooklet now meanders slow
  'Neath many a crystal arch of quaint design:
Beside its banks wild ivy, stooping low,
  Festoons the sleeping violet's mossy shrine,
  And silver-pencil'd holly-boughs entwine
Their shining leaves among old winter's locks of snow.

Yon rustic cot, dimly discernèd through
  The tall hoar-frosted hedgerows, blithely sends
Through the keen air its curling smoke-clouds blue.
  O'er drifted moors the shepherd slowly wends,
  And "faithful Tray" his master's call attends;
But neither flock nor fold greet their bewilder'd view.

Strange revels held the storm-sprites, yestere'en,
  Among these lonely lanes, where braided snow
In forms grotesque and graceful now is seen;
  How poor man's boasted art seems mid the glow
  Of this magnificence! Abashed, we bow.
What of the dazzling throne, if this the footstool's screen!

To nature's shrine each circling season brings
  Its meed of joy-inspiring loveliness;
Each passing month comes crown'd with garlandings
  Of "sweet variety," the year to bless;—
  Array'd in emerald or in ermine dress,
Fresh beauties open still, fresh charms the minstrel sings.

Yet hath it storm, and cloud, and dreary night,
This changeable creation; and I trace
Upon its pages death, and curse, and blight.
It hath no spell the soul's wild fears to chase,
No whisper of the spirit's resting-place,
When from these shores of time she makes her lonely flight.

Let me search nature's volume in the light
Of Revelation; let me grasp Thy key
Of sacred truth, O Lord; then to my sight
Shall open many a hidden mystery,
And each new bliss unfold new views of Thee,
And that fair land afar, where "there shall be no night."

—*Baysiate, near Rochdale.* M. T.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

January 12, 1868.—Sect. II., Quest. II.

Life in Death.

During ten months an aged disciple had lain on her bed in utter helplessness. At one time the good woman had been able to find holy delight in doing the will of her Saviour, by making those around her happier. But she was smitten down by paralysis, and became unable to move hand or foot, and quite incapable of speaking; but her daughter and granddaughter were pleased to observe that at times it was evident the invalid was striving by her looks to express her thankfulness and love. Her body was fast sinking, but her soul was full of life. The pious friends felt, however, that, had it been the will of God, they would have been grateful for some testimony from the lips of their loved one after her painful seizure. Their devout wish was wonderfully realized. After ten months of silence, the sufferer startled her granddaughter by exclaiming, in loud but reverent tone, "Praise—the—Lord!" The soul still lived amid the ruins of the earthly tabernacle. Soon after the utterance of this testimony, her happy spirit went to heaven.

Jan. 19.—Sect. II., Quest. III.

Purrum Soatuntre.

The man who bore the above-mentioned name, which sounds strangely to English ears, was a native of Benares, in the north of India. Like millions of his countrymen, he was ignorant concerning the rectitude and goodness of the one true God. He had never been taught why God made man. When Purrum was only ten years old he began a life of self-mortification, and used to lie on thorns and pebbles; and at last he got a bed of spikes, in which he was drawn about the country. Most likely he fancied that his self-inflicted tortures would prove pleasing to the gods, and found delight in the attention and respect paid to him by the people. He was taken on his dreadful bed for thousands of miles, the poor people everywhere worshipping him as a god. He travelled in this way for thirty-five years. In the winter he caused water to fall on his head, night and day, drop by drop, from a pot with holes in it; and in hot weather had fires kept burning around him.

Jan. 26.—Sect. II., Quest. IV.

Search for a Home.

One day a good man set out to search for a home in the city of Manchester. You may as well know at once that it was not for himself, but for his parents. He thought it necessary to remain in a noisy street, that he might attend to his business; but God had so far prospered his efforts that he could afford to select a comfortable house for those he loved. Hour after hour he spent in the search. One house was surrounded by too much bustle, and another was too far from his own. *This* was in the country, but too far from chapel; and *that*, conveniently near the house of prayer, but there were too few flowers, and too much smoke near. So the good man returned home, and sent his wife hither and thither, until a suitable home was found for his parents.

You cannot be told half the pains he took; but you may be sure that he loved his father and mother. He could not shut out pain, nor disease, nor death; but he did his best for them, because he loved them. In a far higher degree we perceive how God loved our first parents by the home He provided.

February 2.—Sect. II., Quest. V.

The Colossus of Rhodes.

About three hundred years before the birth of Christ, the inhabitants of Rhodes engaged an artist to form an immense statue of brass. It was to be seventy cubits in height, and all its parts in proportion, and as beautiful as the artist could make it. Twelve years were spent in its formation. When complete, it was regarded as one of the wonders of the world, and all who went to the island greatly admired it. Fifty-six years after its completion it was overthrown by an earthquake. It is recorded that the fragments of brass of which it had been composed remained scattered on the ground for about nine hundred years, and were at length sold to a Jewish merchant, who required nine hundred camels to carry the metal away. The image, however, though beautiful, had no resemblance to God. It could not think, it could not know right from wrong, it could not experience happiness, it could not love, it soon was destroyed.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

January 12, 1868.—Section VI., Questions XIII. and XIV.

The New Commandment.

A surprising act performed by Christ.—Do we read in the New Testament that the Lord Jesus, at any time, required the disciples to wash His feet? Do we read that He ever washed the feet of the disciples? He did so immediately before giving the new commandment, which we are now considering. Was it more usual for persons in those times to wash their feet after a journey than it is among us? Is it hotter in Palestine than here? Did the people wear shoes, or boots, similar to ours? Could the sandal be readily removed from the foot? When Christ was about to wash the feet of His disciples, did any one of them object? Most likely all thought it strange that He should wish to do so. Servants generally washed the feet of their employers. Peter affirmed that he would not allow Jesus to wash his feet. Did he at length yield to Christ's wish?

An important lesson taught by Christ.—We may learn from the narrative the importance of purity of heart and life. But Jesus seems to have intended specially to teach us that Christ's disciples ought greatly to love one another; and that they ought not to allow pride, selfishness, or indolence to prevent them from helping each other. Do you think that Christ meant that we should literally wash each other's feet? We never read that He directed Peter to wash John's feet, or Andrew to wash Bartholomew's. The Pope, once a year, with great pomp and show, is said to wash the feet of twelve poor men. But their feet are well washed before, and the water is brought in a golden basin, and there is a vast display. Is that the kind of washing which Christ meant? We are to love and help each other.

Exercises.—Are Christian disciples to have special affection for their fellow-disciples? In what way can such affection be shown? Who commands us to cherish such affection? Whose example is specially placed before us in the New Testament?

Jan. 19.—Sect. VI., Quest. XV.

Sin in the Heart.

Guilty; though another did the deed.—David, for the greater part of his life, was a very good man. But at one time he yielded to the Tempter, and was led into grievous sin; for he became guilty of the murder of Uriah the Hittite. Did David poison Uriah? Did David fling a javelin at Uriah? Did he thrust a sword through him? Do you know the name of the man who really killed Uriah? It is not known. David probably never so much as knew it. When Uriah was killed, David was not near; he was in Jerusalem, and Uriah was near Rabbah, in Syria. Yet the word of the Lord came to David: "Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite, with the sword." (2 Sam. xii. 9.) David had directed that Uriah should be so placed that he would most likely be killed. So the weapon which took away the life of the unfortunate man was regarded as having been

guided by David. Thou "hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon."

Guilty; even if the deed had not been done.—God, in His allwise providence, did not prevent the death of Uriah. We hope he was made ready to die. He would have been greatly distressed had he been spared to return home. But if God had prevented his being slain, David would, in the Divine estimation, have been equally guilty. The Lord could, had He thought it best, have prevented any sword, or javelin, or spear, or arrow hurting the Hittite. But such an interposition of Divine Providence would not have made David a better man. The wickedness had been allowed within his heart, and God would have been angry with David even had Uriah returned home uninjured.

EXERCISES.—Is there any sin beside that of outward action? Where does all sin commence? Ought we to be in earnest to have our hearts purified? Who can thus cleanse our souls? Is the gracious Spirit willing to sanctify those who pray?

Jan. 26.—SECT. VI., QUESTS. XVI., XVII., AND XVIII.

Perfect Obedience.

A fatal flaw.—A servant who in anything disobeys his master, shows that he is not prepared to render perfect and implicit obedience. Under similar circumstances he will be likely to disobey again. Who was the first King of Israel? God sent Saul to fight against the Amalekites, and directed him to destroy them, and everything belonging to them. To gratify his own pride, and to please the people, Saul disobeyed God. His disobedience was offensive to God, and showed that his heart was not right with Him. For a time he might be obedient; but, when again exposed to temptation, he would be likely to yield to it. (1 Sam. xv.)

Universal goodwill.—When we read that God commands us to love our neighbour, we are to understand that every human being is meant by the word "neighbour." Not merely those who live in the same street, or on the same side of the river, or in the same county, or speak the same language, but all people are included. The Jews were descended from Abraham; were the Samaritans so descended? The Jews worshipped at Jerusalem; did the Samaritans do so? When the good Samaritan saw the poor Jew who had fallen among thieves, did he do right to help him? (Luke x. 29—37.)

A useful test.—Sometimes we may be perplexed even when we are trying to do right. It is not always easy to know what is right. When we wish to know how we ought to treat others, we shall often find much help by inquiring how we should, under similar circumstances, desire to be treated ourselves. Do you remember the parable of the King and his two debtors? You will find it Matt. xviii. 23—35. The unmerciful man might plead that he had a right to his money; but he would have thought it very hard if he himself had been cast into prison and punished because he could not pay.

EXERCISES.—If, in anything, we prefer our way to God's way, shall we be accounted guilty? Who is meant, in the Bible, by the term "neighbour?" What is the best method of ascertaining how we ought to act towards others?

February 2.—SECT. VI., QUESTS. XIX. AND XX.

Treatment of Enemies.

The Syrians around Dothan.—We read that on one occasion the soldiers of Syria were gathered in great force around Dothan, a city belonging to Israel. The Syrians were accustomed to make incursions into neighbouring states to plunder them. But, when they assembled around Dothan, it was chiefly to capture one man, who had greatly displeased the King, their master. That man was a Prophet, and the successor to Elijah. What was his name? What had Elisha done which proved so offensive to the King of Syria? Because, by the help of God, Elisha had disclosed the cruel purposes of the Syrian monarch, and so saved Israel out of his hand, that King was determined to take him prisoner.

The Syrians led to Samaria.—In answer to Elisha's prayer, God smote the Syrian soldiers with blindness. They were then altogether helpless, and were compelled to do whatever they were directed to do. Elisha led them away from Dothan, and brought

them to Samaria. Then he prayed to God, and He opened their eyes. They must have been terrified when they saw that they were in the capital city of Israel, and completely within the power of the Israelites.

The Syrians sent to their own land.—The King of Israel asked Elisha if he should put those cruel Syrians to death. Did the Prophet say that he was to do so? God often does, in this world, punish wicked people; and He sometimes employed the Israelites as His sword. But in this instance the Syrians were specially seeking the destruction of Elisha, and that servant of God was allowed to manifest the kindness of his heart. Were the Syrians slain? Were they sent home hungry? Had they anything besides bread and water to refresh them? After the feast, were any presents given to them? (2 Kings vi. 13—23.)

Exercises.—Does it ever happen that good people have enemies? If any man hates us, may we lawfully hate him? How are we to try to overcome our enemies? Will God forgive us, if we refuse to forgive others? Shall we be happier if we try to do good to all?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Christian Fingoes.

The cotton-famine will never be forgotten in Lancashire. In consequence of the war in America, the mills in England had no sufficient supply of the raw material, and there was a diminished market for goods. Myriads of "the hands" were thrown out of employment, and were in danger of starving. A noble liberality was displayed in every part of England, and in many other portions of the world. Amongst others who heard of the distress were some converted Fingoes in South Africa. They were themselves very poor, and, not long before, their tribes were all heathen. When idolaters, they were selfish; they would not then have aided any of their own countrymen if they found them famishing. But grace had changed their hearts. The Missionaries told them of the trouble that had come upon thousands of homes in England. The Fingoes also learned that among the sufferers were some who truly loved the Lord Jesus Christ. This greatly affected those dark-skinned people. They had themselves been permitted to become disciples of Christ, and had been taught, by the word and Spirit, to have a strong affection towards all disciples of the Saviour. So these Fingoes resolved to do what they could to help their famishing brethren and sisters in Lancashire. They collected as much money as they possibly could, denying themselves of comforts in order to do so. The money was sent to England. That remittance was a glorious evidence of the power of true religion. We may learn something concerning the meaning of the Lord's "New Commandment" from those converted Fingoes. (No. II. *January* 12.)

Alice and Ruth.

Alice was five years old. She was greatly beloved, and was generally a very good girl. She had a little cousin named Ruth to whom she was much attached, and with whom she often played. One night, at Alice's bed-time, her sister Sarah offered to take her to bed, as their mother was engaged with company. Alice, however, said that she very much wished her mother would come and take her to bed. At length the child crept into bed, but without tasting her supper, and looking very unhappy. Sarah, on her return, whispered to her mother that she was afraid dear Alice was poorly. Their mother, therefore, hastened to the chamber. As she entered the room, she perceived that the child was crying. "My child, what troubles you? tell me." "O, mother! I am so glad you have come. I cannot go to sleep. O, mother! I have *killed* Ruth *in my heart* to-day. She was angry with me, and I wished she was dead. I can't ask God's forgiveness until I have made it up with Ruth." Her mother tried to comfort her, but there lay the cold, heavy weight of sin upon her bosom. Alice's father was called, who, wrapping his weeping child in a blanket, carried her to her cousin Ruth, whose house was next to their own. She was taken to Ruth's bedside. The confession, prayer for forgiveness, and kiss of reconciliation formed a touching scene. When brought again to her own room, Alice knelt and prayed, "Lord, keep me from hating and killing anybody in my heart." (No. II. *January* 19.)

The Brave Student.

One fearful winter-day a vessel was driven upon a sandbank near the town of St. Andrews, Scotland. The news soon spread among the inhabitants, and many hastened towards the spot. The ship had been cast ashore but a few hundred yards from the houses. Though the heavy air was darkened by the drifting sleet, the onlookers could, at intervals, see the figures of the crew clinging to the ropes and spars. Then some immense wave would

break over the vessel, and shroud all in surfy mist. Had the sea been calm, a few vigorous strokes would have placed a good swimmer by the vessel's side; but now the hardiest among the sailors and fishermen drew back, not daring to face the fearful surge. At length a student of divinity volunteered. Tying a rope round his waist, and struggling through the surf, he threw himself among the waves. Forcing his way, though slowly, he was nearing the vessel's side, when his friends on shore, alarmed at the length of time which had elapsed, began to pull him towards the land. Seizing a knife, which he was carrying between his teeth, he cut the rope, and at length reached the stranded sloop. He then drew a fresh rope from the vessel to the shore. The crew, however, weak and wearied through four days' tossing amid the tempest, without food, had not strength to avail themselves of the rope. The young man again forced his way through the waves, and eventually succeeded in bringing all the crew, six men and a lad, to shore. The brave student eventually sank into fatal disease, in consequence of his exertions and exposure on that occasion. But, although his stay on earth was thus shortened, he has left a noble example of generous courage. (No. II. *January* 26.)

Peter Links.

A NATIVE Christian teacher, named Jacob Links, was murdered when accompanying the Rev. W. Threlfall, Wesleyan Missionary. Jacob Links had a brother named Peter, who survived him. Peter was heard one day to say, "I wish I could find the murderer who took away my brother's life. I would not care what distance I had to travel, nor any exposure, fatigue, or expense, or danger, if I could only lay hold of that man." The Missionary had believed Peter to be a truly good man, and was astonished to hear him speak in this manner. The Namaqua tribe, to which the brothers belonged, had been noted for daring and fierceness; but Peter was regarded as a true Christian. "Well," the Missionary said, "supposing you found the guilty man, what would you do to him?" "Do to him," said Peter, "I would bring him to this station, Mynheer, [or Sir,] that he might hear the Gospel, and that his soul might be converted to God." (No. II. *February* 2.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

January 5.—The Child Saved.

EXOD. ii. 7: "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse?"

1. *The child in danger.*—Moses was born in Egypt, where his parents and all the Hebrews were slaves. Pharaoh, the King, feared lest they should become so many in number as to rise against their masters; so he ordered that every little boy should be put to death as soon as born! But Moses' parents could not obey this cruel and wicked order; and his mother "hid him three months." Then she feared that the King would hear of it, and would put him to death. Still she hoped to save him, and made a little cradle of bulrushes, put the child in it, and laid it among the flags by the river-side. She then trusted in God to come to their help.

2. *The watcher.*—While the babe lay there, a little girl of twelve years old stood "afar off" upon the river bank. This was his sister, whom their mother had set there to watch what would become of Moses. She waited there, wondering what would happen, and what news she should have to take home to her anxious mother. But did no one else see the child? Yes; the eye of God was on the helpless babe. He sees us at all times; no child is too young or too feeble to be unnoticed by Him. Do you know what little boy it was whose voice God heard as he lay perishing in the wilderness? and to whose help an angel came? It is a blessed thing to know that in the day of trouble He will hear your voice, if you cry to Him.

3. *The child in safety.*—As the King's daughter walked by the river-side, "she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and, behold, the babe wept." Then she had pity on the helpless little one, and said she would care for it, and keep it as her own. Just then his sister, who had come near, said, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse?" And she was sent, and fetched the child's mother. Here was a joyful end to the trouble! Who had brought all this about? Moses was cared for by the love of his mother, and the power of

Pharaoh's daughter, and better still by the favour of God, and became a great and good man. What good lessons may we learn from the mother, and the sister, and the child?

REVISION.—How came Moses to be in danger? How was he saved? What should we do in time of trouble? How do we know that God will hear us?

Jan. 12.—**How to keep from Sin.**

Ps. iv. 4: "Stand in awe, and sin not."

1. *We easily fall into sin.*—There are many ways of doing this. Our thoughts and tempers are often wrong. How quickly evil tempers rise! anger, disobedience, envy; even little children may have these. These make the words and actions evil. Why is this? Because we are born with sinful hearts, and it is from the heart that all sin comes. But why is sin an evil thing? Because,—

2. *Sin brings punishment.*—It does so *while we live.* Punishment to ourselves, trouble and sorrow of many kinds. Punishment to others. The sin of children brings shame and sorrow to parents; so does the sin of parents to their children. Are you told in the Bible of any sins which did this? What was the sorrow brought by the *first* sin? But sin brings punishment *after death.* "The wicked shall be turned into hell." These words of truth are very awful. God has said, "The soul that sinneth *it shall die.*" How may we escape this? Our verse tells us one way of keeping from sin.

3. *Fear keeps from sin.*—But what should we fear? We should fear the *punishment* which sin brings. This is why the Bible speaks of it, that we may "stand in awe." Noah, moved by fear, "prepared an ark."

But, more than this, we should "*fear God.*" By the fear of God men "depart from evil." He hates sin, and has forbidden it. Let us "stand in awe" of His word, and of His power, "and sin not."

REVISION.—What is it to "stand in awe?" Of whom should we stand in awe? why? Why is sin an evil thing? How may we escape sin?

Jan. 19.—**The Leper's Prayer.**

MARK i. 40: "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

1. *The leper's need.*—This poor man's disease was one of the worst from which a man can suffer. No medicine could make him well, no doctor could cure him. It was so much feared, that lepers were often obliged to leave home and friends, and dwell apart from every comfort of life. In this sickness there was no rest, the body was full of pain, and the mind of grief and fear. While in this state the leper *came to Jesus.*

2. *The leper's prayer.*—See, first, *how* he prayed. "*Beseeching Him,*" asking very earnestly. Why? Because he felt his need, and knew this was his only hope. "*Kneeling down to Him.*" Why? Because he was *humble;* he knew the *power* of Christ, and that he himself could offer nothing, but was only poor and needy. Hear, now, *his prayer.* "If Thou *wilt,* Thou *canst* make me clean." How short and earnest! saying just what he wanted, and no more. He was sure, too, that Jesus *could* cure him, if He would.

3. *The Saviour's answer.*—As Jesus looked at the poor, wretched man kneeling at His feet, He was "moved with compassion"—full of sorrow—and tender pity at his sad state. Others would have spurned him away in fear and anger. Not so Jesus. "He put forth His hand, and touched him." This was, perhaps, the first kind look and touch the man had had since his leprosy came upon him. Then Jesus said, "*I will,* be thou clean!" How kind! how full of power! how exactly what the leper wanted! And "immediately" he was "cleansed."

4. *How we should pray.*—Just as the leper did, as *earnestly,* and as *humbly.* None pray thus who do not feel their need as he did. But have we such a need? Yes! What is that fearful thing, worse than leprosy, which clings to us all? *Sin* is as vile in the soul, in the sight of God, as this disease is loathsome in the body. This lesson teaches us how sin is cleansed. Not by *hearing or learning only* about Jesus, but by going to Him in earnest prayer, *asking* to be cleansed from sin, *sure* of Christ's willingness and power to save.

REVISION.—What was the leprosy? How was the leper healed? How did he pray? What words did he use? What was Christ's answer? What does this teach us about sin? about prayer? about Jesus?

Jan. 26.—A Great Sight.

Exod. iii. 2: "Behold, the bush burned with fire."

1. *The burning bush.*—Moses had left Egypt, and was living where few dwelt, in the wilderness; but God was still with him. He had neither forgotten nor left him. As he was one day *alone*, keeping his sheep, a strange thing happened. A bush not far off suddenly began to burn; but, though the flame came up from the midst of the bush, it was not consumed. This was so wonderful, that Moses said, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight."

2. *The presence of God.*—As Moses came near, a Voice called to him from the bush. Whose was the Voice? Here, then, was something more wonderful than the burning bush. *God was there.* And He told Moses not to draw near, but to put off his shoes, for the place on which he stood was "holy ground." Why was the ground holy? *Because God was there.* When Moses knew that he was in the presence of God, he "hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." None should speak or think of God, or draw nigh to Him in any way, but in *reverence* and *fear*. Do we always think of this? In His house, and on His day?

3. *Why God had come.*—The Israelites were in sad bondage in Egypt. They had for a long time been under hard and cruel masters, and it seemed as though God had forgotten them. Does God ever do this? He sees and knows about each one of us at all times. He now told Moses that He had "heard the cry" of His people, and "knew their sorrows," and had "come down to deliver them;" and that He had chosen him to bring them out of Egypt. He also gave him wisdom and strength for his work.

4. *Lessons for us.*—This is written to teach and to comfort us. God remembers His people now. He will not leave them without help in trouble. He still chooses servants to carry on His work, and still gives them all they need to do it aright. Would you wish to be His servant? and to do His work? How may you get this great honour?

Revision.—What great sight did Moses see? Where was this? What made the ground "holy?" Why had God come down? What does this teach us about God and about His people?

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

49. What law was Peter obeying when he refused to eat the food mentioned in Acts x. 12?

50. What heir to a throne foresaw his exclusion from it with pleasure?

51. Paul spoke favourably of John Mark after his dispute with Barnabas respecting him. (Acts xv. 38.) Where do we find the reference?

52. How much older was Ishmael than Isaac?

53. Esau married one of his cousins; what was her name?

54. Which of Paul's friends was dangerously ill through his ministerial labours?

H.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.—No. XIII.

With letters twenty-eight a question you may find,
That was proposed to one who afterwards was blind.

13 | 12 | 10 | 16 | 1 | 3 | 5

1 v. Where did some people meet, and long and loudly shout,
Although they could not say what it was all about?

2 | 4 | 11 | 27 | 2 | 15

2 v. Who heard the word of God, but still its force withstood,
And others tried to keep from learning what was good?

8 | 11 | 21 | 19 | 14 | 6

3 v. Where did a heathen priest a sacrifice prepare,
Because the people said his deity was there?

28 | 7 | 22 | 11 | 17 | 24 | 18 | 15

4 v. Who sat above the rest, and had a fearful fall,
When preacher, text, and sermon were forgotten all?

12 | 2 | 12 | 24 | 25 | 21

5 v. Where did a deputy desire to learn the truth,
And was instructed by two preachers and a youth?

23 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 26 | 5

6 v. Where was a preacher sent, to save him from his foes,
When they his arguments with truth could not oppose?

9 | 6 | 14

7 v. What is that costly art which men will learn no more,
When Gospel grace o'er-spreads the world from shore to shore?

H.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

ROBERT REDFERN.

Robert Redfern, when a lad of eleven or twelve years of age, came to my class in the King-street Wesleyan Sunday-school, Derby, while I was a teacher there, about seventeen years ago. He was not remarkable for anything but his dulness. He could read the New Testament but very imperfectly, and had no desire to improve. For some time he was the dullest boy in the class.

I took some pains to teach my new scholar, but he seemed almost incapable of improvement; too idle to learn, and proof against all my attempts to do him good. Of all the boys in my class, Robert Redfern was the one I should have singled out, I think, as the least likely to receive benefit from my labours.

At length I began to observe that there was a little improvement in my unpromising pupil. He began to take pains to spell out the words of the reading-lesson; became more attentive to what was said, and more respectful in his behaviour. After this he began to make progress, and could soon read as well as any boy in the class. The change was so rapid and so marked, as to excite the astonishment of all who observed him. Very soon, from being the worst, he became the best, reader in the class; while in every respect his "profiting appeared unto all."

I was frequently much struck with the great propriety of emphasis and intonation with which he read the more touching and beautiful portions of the Scriptures, and with the manifest impression they made on his mind. Observing that his little Bible contained a number of paper-marks, I asked him to let me look at it; and, on examining the places, I found that the Book was well read, and that many precious portions had been marked by the youthful student. These passages were soon committed to memory with apparent facility and great correctness.

About the same time Robert began to make his appearance at the Saturday-evening prayer-meeting. I took an early opportunity of detaining him after one of these meetings, when something like the following conversation took place between us:—

Teacher.—"Well, Robert, my boy, I am very glad indeed to see you coming to

these meetings. I hope you are now making up your mind to love and serve God, and to get to heaven."

Robert. (His face lighting up with a beautiful expression.)—"Yes, Sir, I am trying to serve God; and I *do* love Him."

This was the first fruit I had then seen of my labour in the Sabbath-school, and it was very sweet to my taste. I invited him to come and meet in my class; and there, on the following week, in the simplest language, he stated what he had felt, and feared, and resolved; and how he had come to Jesus, and found peace by believing on His name, and the joy he had since felt in loving and serving God. The mystery of his so suddenly learning to read needed no further explanation.

I had read accounts of great depth of experience and wonderful acquaintance with Scripture on the part of very young persons, which hitherto I had been disposed to think were somewhat overdrawn; but in this case I saw a remarkable instance of the fulfilment of the word: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." Seldom have I ever listened to experience more rich, and expressed in language so appropriate and scriptural, yet with the utmost simplicity and humility of manner. His prayers in the class were marked by simplicity, spirituality, and power; and in the cottage prayer-meetings, to which he was taken by some of the leaders, his simple, earnest, touching intercessions were made a blessing even to persons of age and experience.

Such unusual maturity of spiritual life in very young persons, it has been noticed, seems frequently to foreshadow an early removal from earth. It was, perhaps, about eighteen months, or two years, after his conversion, that I began to observe that Robert Redfern looked pale and thin. As winter came on, he seemed to suffer from the cold; was troubled with a distressing cough; and soon I saw in his cheek the ominous hectic flush, and the unearthly brightness in the eye, which too plainly told me that my beloved little friend would not go in and out among us much longer.

Not long after he was absent from school. I knew the reason, and, on calling, found he was confined to the house, and pronounced to be suffering from pulmonary consumption. Soon he was confined to his bed, and the insidious disease made rapid progress.

Now came the testing of his religion. It was tried in the fire of disease and pain, and in the prospect of speedy dissolution. All was peace, assurance, and joy. No cloud seemed ever to arise. As his body became weaker, and his face thinner, and the cough more distressing, and it was plain that his last hour was fast approaching, his peace was as a river; his hope brighter and more full until the end.

"If thou, O man of death, art bound in dread,
Come to this chamber,—sit beside this bed;
Mark how the name of Christ, breath'd o'er the heart,
Makes the soul smile at death's uplifted dart."

The humble chamber where the little dying Christian lay was a holy place. The Master was there. It seemed very near to the portals of heaven; and those Christian friends who visited the bedside, felt like the disciples on the Mount, and were ready to say, "It is good for us to be here."

The end speedily approached. It was on this wise. Robert sent for his father, who was a worthy, Christian man, to come to his bedside. He came. The poor boy exclaimed, "Father, clasp me; I shall die directly!" and the minute after expired in his arms.

Does this account meet the eye of a Sunday-scholar? You may die soon. Very many persons die young.

"Youth is not rich in *time;* it may be poor.
Part with it as with money,—sparing.
Pay no moment but in purchase of its worth.
And what it's worth, ask death-beds,—*they* can tell."

You, my young friend, would like, I am sure, to die as did this dear lad. Then begin to read, mark, and learn the precious Book, as he did. Begin, as he began, to pray for wisdom, light, grace, forgiveness. Unite yourself to the people of God, as he did. Give God your heart, as He entreats you to do, Prov. xxiii. 26.

"Remember *now* thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Then, whenever death comes, in youth, or manhood, or old age, you will welcome it with a cheerful countenance, and be able to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 57.)

H. J.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The New Creation. By the Rev. John Mills. Pp. 344. London: E. Stock.—It is the object of this book "to show that the new heavens and new earth, predicted in the Old and New Testaments, represent the dispensation of Divine grace as revealed in the Gospel, and manifested in the establishment and perpetuation of Christianity:" that "by the 'new heavens' we are to understand that Divine system by which the inhabitants of the earth will be made partakers of a spiritual nature, and become obedient to the will of God; and by the 'new earth,' that happy condition of the human family when this work shall have been effected; . . . and to show from the discoveries of geology what kind of analogy may be supposed to exist between the creation and constitution of the globe on which we live, and that renovating process of the world by which those blessings will be realized." The theme is a most interesting and instructive one, and is very ably handled. It would, perhaps, be too much to expect that, on such a subject, a writer's opinions should readily command general assent: but we have here found much that is convincing and conclusive. The theories of a pre-millenial advent of the Saviour, and of a renewed earth as the final abode of the righteous, are vigorously combated; and the injurious effects which may result from the reception and propagation of such theories are pointed out. It can but be "important to know whether we are to expect the Redeemer in bodily presence on earth before the nations will be converted, or whether the preaching of the Gospel, with the work of the Holy Spirit, will produce that blessed result." This is plainly not a merely speculative matter, but one which closely affects Christian faith and effort; and we commend the book before us to the study of Ministers and the more intelligent class of teachers, as being an able, thoughtful, and valuable treatise, which, in the main, takes what we believe to be the right side on the pre-millenial question.

Onward to God: or, the Sure Way to the Crown. By the Rev. Samuel Weir. Pp. 139. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.—"Written for the guidance and encouragement of young converts." So says the author. We recommend it as well answering to its design; and assure older Christians that they, too, may find in it much to make its perusal profitable. It exhibits the progress of sanctification in various practical aspects, as these are stated by St. Peter, in verses five to seven of the first chapter of his Second Epistle; of which passage the successive chapters of the book form a good exposition and application.

Children and Jesus. By Edward Payson Hammond. London: S. W. Partridge.—Mr. Hammond is an American minister, (now in this country,) who has an excellent aptitude for teaching the Gospel to children, and leading them to present faith in Jesus. He has achieved a degree of success in this good work which many others would do well to emulate. The chapters of the little book before us are written much in the style of his effective addresses. He uses simple words, employs short and lively sentences, and aptly illustrates the truths he seeks to inculcate. Some of the letters written to him by little ones are given in this book, and are very touching and beautiful.

The Class and the Desk. By J. C. Gray. Pp. 293. London: J. Sangster and Co.—The first three parts of this

volume we noticed and commended in the October number of this Magazine for 1866. The promise of that early portion is well sustained throughout the one hundred and twenty lessons on New-Testament subjects, and the forty-seven outlines of Sunday-school sermons which this very neatly-produced and skilfully-arranged book supplies. We subjoin some of the author's "prefatory remarks:" they will not only indicate the character and aim of his book, but will equally well sketch those of the "Exercises on Scripture Lessons," which are found monthly within the covers of this periodical. "Preparation for the class is universally admitted to be a duty by all earnest Sunday-school teachers, and is recognised as a necessary condition of pleasure and success in their work. By a great multitude of teachers, however, the simplest preparation is felt to be no easy matter. *Time* is the great want of many whose weekly occupations leave them but little leisure; *books* of a practical nature are the great need of many more; while a *knowledge of systematic arrangement* is possessed by few who have both the former requirements. In the majority of cases, the teacher who addresses himself to the work of preparation, knows not *how* nor *where* to begin. He can read the Bible for his own profit, but cannot readily prepare a lesson from it for the edification of others. One of two consequences is likely to follow: either the work of teaching is pursued in a desultory and inefficient manner, or, appalled by unforeseen difficulties, the teacher presently retires from his post. It is to meet such difficulties that this volume has been prepared. Even these preparations will not be successfully used without some little previous study; since they are designed to *aid*, and not *supersede*, diligence on the teacher's part. Hence they have been constructed on the principle of suggestiveness. Helps of an exhaustive kind would injure rather than benefit. Suggestive hints, such as the teacher may follow out according to the bent of his own mind, are the things most needed. Such hints, arranged systematically,—more to aid the memory than for purposes of sermonic division in class-teaching,—are all that is attempted; all that could be attempted, in so limited a space; all, indeed, that the sanctified ingenuity of the teacher will require. Suggestions admit of variety of illustration, suited alike to both the teacher and the scholar; anything beyond this would stereotype both thought and expression."

Leaves from the Book and its Story; for Bible-Women and Working-Men. By L. N. R. Issued Monthly. London: W. Macintosh.—"The World before the Flood;" "The Times between the Flood and Abram;" "The Life of Abraham;" "Arabia and the Patriarch Job;" "Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph in Egypt;" such are the titles of the five numbers of this useful publication: and the initials of the writer (so well known on the title-page of "The Book and its Story") are a guarantee of their excellence. Printed in large type, and illustrated with engravings, they contain information which will be as convenient and useful to teachers of Bible-classes in schools as to those for whom the writer specially designs them.

Scripture-Questions in Rhyme. By W. Holloway. Wesleyan Training College, Westminster. — Printed on separate leaflets, with cards in each packet, containing the key to their solution. These questions may be advantageously used in the senior classes of Sunday-schools, as also in private schools and families; and they will supply day-schools with home-exercises for the Sabbath in a very handy and attractive form. To call forth from the memories of young people Scriptural truths and facts in a way which yields them pleasure, and to give an agreeable stimulus to their attention in the study of the Bible, is a work which is as kind as it is good. This is what Mr. Holloway aims at in these Questions, and he is entitled to thanks for the pains he has taken, and the skill he has shown in their production. They merit an extensive sale.

The Wesleyan-Methodist Kalendar, and Daily Remembrancer—the Pocket-Diary and Kalendar—and the Pocket-Book—for 1868, published at the Wesleyan Conference Office, are severally, as usual,

full of hints and information carefully compiled; and are very neatly and compactly got up. No Methodist Sunday-school teacher is fully equipped for his work who does not possess one or other of the set.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

How the Dumb are taught to Speak.

A NUMBER of clergy attached to a religious brotherhood—Les Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne, whom I found by conversation to be men of high talent and culture—carried on this work. It was to one of these brethren so engaged, Frère Cyrille, that my Brussels friend presented me. I found him a bright, accomplished man, in the best years of life, dressed in the clerical costume of his country—the long black cassock with that interminable row of small buttons down the front, and his beads hung at his girdle, and the little close-fitting black cap — known as the Solidee (*Soli Deo*)—just upon the crown of the head. Such is the man who is the leading spirit of this unique establishment. After a little preliminary conversation, he proceeded to pilot me through the house. Promising to begin with the most elementary stage of the education, he led me first into a large airy room fitted with ordinary schoolroom desks, forms, blackboards, diagrams, and usual apparatus of elementary education. The room, indeed, was remarkable for the absence of only one of the attributes of a well-appointed schoolroom: there was none of the familiar buzz of plodding schoolboys. Here sat some five-and-twenty boys, from seven to twelve years old, in some cases literally struggling to imitate the lip movements of their teacher, and making, thereby, noises uncouth and various enough; but so impressive was the silence in the intervals of their attempts, that one quite longed for some of those furtive whispers, which all go to make up that impalpable sort of hum which is one of the bugbears of the schoolmaster. These boys were acquiring the first rudiments of the art of speech under the tuition of another of the brethren,—also a cassocked ecclesiastic,—who seemed blessed with an amount of forbearance that was astonishing. The earliest lesson, of course, was the articulation of single open syllables; that is to say, of a consonant with a vowel attached. The process by which this was attained was, I observed, twofold. First, simply the eye of the pupil was used. The teacher articulated in a very marked manner the consonant that was under notice. By signs and gestures the dumb boy was directed to watch the movement minutely, and to make it himself. If he succeeded in doing so, all well and good; the object was achieved. But if he failed, as was often the case; if, for example, instead of "ma," he articulated "ba," then the sense of touch was called in to the rescue. The teacher felt about his own organs to see exactly how they were affected by his articulation of the particular consonant which caused the difficulty. He would find that there was, perhaps, a movement in the throat, or, by the pressure of the fingers against the side of the nose, that a current of air was driven down the nostrils by the articulation in question. Having discovered this, he took the boy's finger and put it to his own (the teacher's) organ, and articulated the consonant distinctly and repeatedly, so that the boy should feel exactly what the movement of the part was that was required of him. The boy was then directed to put his finger upon his own throat or nostril, and by his own movements produce the same impression upon his finger as was produced by the articulation of the teacher. A hundred times he would fail; and a hundred times would this much-enduring *frère*, without the faintest shadow of impatience or irritation, go through the whole ceremonial again.—*Cornhill Magazine.*

Divine Promises.

EVERY promise of God is built upon four pillars:—God's justice and holiness, which will not suffer Him to deceive; His grace and goodness, which will not suffer Him to forget; His truth, which will not suffer Him to change; and His power, which makes Him able to accomplish.—*Salter.*

Do not Delay.

NEVER put off till to-morrow what Scripture, reason, and conscience tell you ought to be done to-day. To-morrow is not yours; and, though you should live to enjoy it, why should you overload it with a burden not its own.

"Keep by the Cross."

I WAS travelling in Switzerland, says a traveller, in the summer of 1857, and determined to ascend Mount Joli; a mountain

not far from St. Gervais. As I made the ascent unaccompanied by a guide, it was with some difficulty I found the right track. Having at length, however, reached the foot of the mountain, I inquired of a peasant how I should find the way to the summit. He answered, in French, to this effect: "You cannot mistake the way; *but be sure you keep by the cross!*" A large wooden cross had been erected as a guide-post about half-way to the summit, and the path led immediately past it. The words of the Swiss peasant struck me very forcibly as the true direction to those who are seeking to find their way from this present evil world to the heights of the heavenly Zion. Reader, are you anxious to be saved? Are you asking your way to heaven with your face thitherward? Do you long for peace with God; the full forgiveness of all sin; a good hope for eternity; a crown of glory; "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?" Then listen to these words: "Be sure you keep by the Cross!"

Bible-Billy.

THE unmarried sister of Dr. Marsh's father loved her little nephew William; and, during her visits to his father's house, had the child often with her, and read to him stories from the Bible. His great love for these lessons in Holy Scripture caused his brothers to call him "Bible-Billy;" a name which proved truly significant of his devotion to the Word of God in after years. Two months before his death, whilst reading with his usual intentness, two friends entered the room, and stood by his chair for some time before he perceived them. On looking up he greeted them with a bright smile, saying, as he held out the sacred volume, "With this staff have I travelled through my pilgrimage; and with this staff I will pass over Jordan."

Do you ever Pray?

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher, knowing that all the boys in his class were much occupied during the week, feared that the duty, or rather the privilege, of prayer, was sometimes neglected; he, therefore, urged upon them most forcibly its necessity, and, at the close of his address, he asked a boy, ten years of age, who led a wretched life in the service of a chimney-sweeper, "Do you ever pray? You go out very early in the morning, do you not?" "Yes, Sir, we are only half awake. I think about God, but cannot say I pray then." "What, then?" "You see, our master orders us to get up the chimney quickly, but we can rest a little on the top, and then I sit on the top of the chimney and pray." "And what do you say?" "It is very little. I do not know any long words to speak to God. I mostly say a verse I learnt at school." "And what was it?" He repeated with fervour, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Nothing is Lost.

WHERE is the snow?
'Tis not long ago
It cover'd the earth with a veil of white.
We heard not its footsteps soft and light,
Yet there it was in the morning bright;
Now it hath vanished away from sight.
Not a trace remains
In fields or lanes.

Where is the frost?
They are gone and lost—
The forms of beauty last night it made.
With pictures rare were windows array'd.
"Be silent," it said; the brook obey'd.
Yet silence and pictures all did fade:
At the smile of the sun
All was undone.

Where is the rain?
Pattering it came,
Dancing along with a merry sound.
A grassy bed in the fields it found;
Each drop came on the roof with a bound.
Where is the rain? It hath left the ground.
What good hath it done,
Gone away so soon?

Ever, ever
Our best endeavour
Seemeth to fall like the melted snow.
We work out our thought wisely and slow;
The seed we sow, but it will not grow.
Our hopes, our resolves—where do they go?
What doth remain?
Memory and pain.

Nothing is lost—
No snow nor frost
That come to enrich the earth again.
We thank them when the ripening grain
Is waving over the hill and plain,
And the pleasant rain springs from earth again.
All endeth in good—
Water and food.

Never despair;
Disappointment bear.
Though hope seemeth vain, be patient still;
Thy good intents God doth fulfil.
Thy hand is weak; His powerful will
Is finishing thy life-work still.
The good endeavour
Is lost!—ah! never.

—*Anon.*

EXERCISES ON THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS

FOR THE SUNDAYS OF 1868.

JANUARY 5.—Morning Lesson.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL.—Mark i. 1—20.

For repetition, verses 9—11.

Summary.—St. Mark commences his Life of Jesus with a brief account of His baptism by John, His temptation in the wilderness, the beginning of His public ministry, and the calling of His first disciples.

I. Christ's Forerunner.—V. 1—8. *The Gospel of*, &c.,—or, "the glad tidings concerning Jesus Christ." *The Son of God.*—The subject of this grand and wonderful story was not a great man merely, but a Divine Person. *As it is written.*—The Gospel began as the *prophets* said it would begin. See Isai. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1. *Behold*, &c.—These words were addressed by the Father to the Son. *My messenger*, &c.—John the Baptist is meant. Ancient kings and conquerors sent pioneers and heralds before them to prepare their way, and announce their coming. *The baptism of repentance,*—or the baptism betokening repentance. John baptized none but penitents. *For*,—or, "unto,"—i.e., in order to, *the remission of sins. Were all baptized,*—showing that they looked no longer to "the blood of bulls and goats" for pardon; but to Messiah, who was at hand. *Clothed*, &c.—Like his type. See 2 Kings i. 8; Mal. iv. 5; Matt. xi. 14. *Latchet,*—"tie," or "buckle." The *shoes* then worn consisted of a sole of wood, strapped round the foot, and tied, or buckled. *With the Holy Ghost.*—The sanctification which John's baptism symbolized, Christ's baptism would actually effect.

II. Jesus Baptized.—V. 9—11. *In those days,*—i.e., while John was in the wilderness, but after "all the people were baptized," Luke iii. 21. *Was baptized,*—not that He needed this; but that He would set an example for all to follow. See Matt. iii. 15. *He,*—i.e., John, *saw*, &c. Here is a proof of the Trinity: the Son was baptized; the Holy Ghost descended; and the Father spoke from heaven.

III. Tempted.—V. 12, 13. *The Spirit driveth Him.*—He was "full of the Spirit," (Luke iv. 1,) and under His strong influence He now went to the wilderness purposely to be tempted, Matt. iv. 1. This *wilderness*, unlike that in which John baptized, was not only remote from men, but savage in its wildness, and infested *with wild beasts.* Our Lord was tempted, it would seem, (compare Luke iv. 2,) during the whole of the forty days; and the three temptations recorded by the other Evangelists were, probably, the severest and the last. *The angels ministered unto Him,*—but not till the fight was over; then they brought Him food, and rejoiced with Him.

IV. Preaching.—V. 14, 15. *In prison*, — for doing his duty. See Matt. xiv. 3, 4. *Jesus came,*—to continue the preaching thus interrupted. *The time is fulfilled.*—See Gal. iv. 4. "The end of the old covenant is at hand; the Son is born, grown up, anointed, (at His baptism,) tempted, gone forth, the testimony of His witness is given, and now He witnesses Himself; now begins that last speaking of God by His Son, (Heb. i. 2,) which henceforth shall be proclaimed in all the world till the end come."—*Stier. And believe the Gospel.*—John preached *repentance* only: Jesus preached repentance and faith.

V. Calling Others to Preach.—V. 16—20. *Simon and Andrew,*—whom He had met before, John i. 40—42. They had previously come to Jesus,

but now they must attend Him. *I will make you.*—None are true Ministers whom He does not make. *Forsook their nets,* — which were their "all," Matt. xix. 27. *With the hired servants.* — These words show that *James* and *John* were not very poor; and that, when they followed Jesus, the old man, their father, was not left alone.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *There is hope for the penitent.* — The impenitent are "lost," Luke xix. 10; and they must repent, or perish.

2. *There is salvation for the believing.* —Penitents may be saved, because they may believe; but without faith their repentance is unavailing.

3. *The kingdom of God is come.*—Are you in it? Have you repented? Do you believe? If not, it has come nigh to you in vain; and there is no other means of salvation for you.

4. *Men are to be caught for Jesus.*— The four disciples were catchers of fish. He wanted them to catch men,—i.e., to go to them, and tell them about Jesus, and get them to repent and believe and be holy. Children should, in this sense, be caught; and then endeavour to catch others.

QUESTIONS.—How did the Gospel begin? What was John's office? his dress? his food? his work? his doctrine? Where did he baptize? why? What happened when Jesus was baptized? Where did He then go? why? When did He begin to preach? What was His doctrine? Whom did He call? why?

Illustrations.—I. ST. MARK.

He is called *John Mark*, Acts xii. 12; but the former of these names is usually omitted. He was the son of a pious woman in Jerusalem, whose name was Mary, and whose house was used by the Christians for prayer-meetings. God says, "Them that honour Me, I will honour;" and Mary, who thus openly honoured Him, in those days of persecution, was honoured in her son. Perhaps his father was dead, as he is never mentioned; but the Lord took him up, and made him a companion of St. Paul, St. Peter, and Barnabas; and the Holy Ghost inspired him to write the life of Christ. See Acts xii. 25; xiii. 5; Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24; 1 Peter v. 13.

II. LOCUSTS.

See v. 6. Some think that the fruit of a tree is meant; but insects are more likely to be intended here. They resemble grasshoppers in shape; but are much larger, and the law considered them clean, Lev. xi. 22. They are still sold for food; and, when dried, salted, and fried, taste, it is said, like shrimps. They are usually eaten with rice or vegetables, though Burckhardt describes the Arabs as taking a handful of them when hungry, and eating them. Moffat saw the natives in South Africa gathering ox-loads of these insects for food.

JANUARY 5.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE PEOPLE AND THE CHILD.—Exodus i. 1—14, 22; ii. 1—10.

SUMMARY.—The Israelites in Egypt, after the death of Joseph, are grievously oppressed by Pharaoh; their future deliverer is born, and adopted by the King's daughter.

I. THE PEOPLE.—Chap. i. 1—14. (1.) *Their ancestors*, v. 1—6.—These verses are a kind of preface to the book. The first three centuries and a half of the four hundred and thirty years, to which the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt extended, are passed quickly over. The historian simply relates the wonderfully rapid increase of the people, and then hastens to describe the circumstances which led to their departure from Egypt. *Exodus*, the name of the book, means a departure. *Seventy souls.* —All these were Jacob's children and grandchildren; but in their *households* (v. 1) their servants were, of course, included, as well as all their cattle; for these formed part of their wealth. Compare Gen. xiv. 14; xxxii. 7, 8. They who went with Jacob to Egypt, including men-servants and maid-servants, were no doubt a large number. *Joseph died.*—He had now been dead about seventy years.

(2.) *Their prosperity*, v. 7.—*Increased abundantly.*—The rapidity of their increase may be gathered from the census taken shortly after the Exodus, Num. i. 45, 46. "From twenty years old and upward," there "were six hundred and

three thousand, five hundred and fifty" men of war; and, if to these be added a fair proportion of old men, women, and children, they must have numbered in all about two millions. Among these must, of course, be reckoned the descendants of the men-servants and women-servants; but, even including them, they could not have increased so rapidly without the special blessing of Him who had promised to make them as the stars of heaven, and the sand of the sea. See Gen. xxii. 17. *The land was filled with them*,—i.e., the land of Goshen. See Gen. xlvii. 6.

(3.) *Their oppressor*, v. 8—10.—*There arose up a new King*,—who, probably, overthrew the former dynasty by force, and established another. *Which knew not Joseph*.—If he had heard of him, he did not respect him. He had no regard for the Israelites, and took no interest in their welfare. *Let us deal wisely with them*.—It appeared dangerous to this King to have them in that border province, which was continually threatened by the tribes on the east. They might confederate with the enemies of Egypt. It seemed to him, therefore, a *wise* thing to break their spirit, and check the excessive rate at which they were increasing.

(4.) *Their tasks*, v. 11—14.—The service they were now forced to render consisted mainly in brick-making and field-labour. By the latter we are, probably, to understand the severe labour of watering the more elevated districts; and by the former, besides the manufacture of bricks, the erection of cities, fortresses, and monuments. Josephus says they built the pyramids; and as the Egyptians are said by Herodotus to have prided themselves in the fact, that not one native was employed in erecting their colossal monuments, the Jewish historian is most likely correct.

II. The Child.—Ch. ii. 1—10. (1.) *Exposed to danger*, v. 1, 2.—The Israelites still increased, and Pharaoh instructed the Hebrew nurses to put all the boys to death, in some private way, as soon as they were born; but the nurses disobeyed his bidding, ch. i. 17. The tyrant then openly commanded the Egyptians to cast all newborn Hebrew boys into the River Nile. At this terrible time Moses was born. Because he was a *goodly child*, his parents believed that God had some great work for him to do; (Acts vii. 20; Heb. xi. 23;) and his mother succeeded in keeping his birth a secret for *three months*.

(2.) *Cast upon Providence*, v. 3, 4.—In hiding Moses his parents showed their faith; but it was further tested. He could not be longer hidden from the keen eyes of the Egyptian executioners. No one now could save Amram's child but Amram's God, before whom he was called to minister. So the mother seems to have thought, and committed her boy to Him. She knew, very likely, where the princess was wont to bathe; and hoped that the sight of her beautiful foundling-babe would open her heart to mercy. Having put him in the *bulrush-basket*, she placed him among the rushes of the Nile; for they would prevent his floating down the river. She then withdrew, and left him with his Maker; only bidding his *sister* Miriam, (Exod. xv. 20,) a girl about twelve years old, to watch his fate.

(3.) *Taken up*, v. 5—8.—The mother's plan succeeded: God honoured her faith in Him.

(4.) *Given back to his mother*, v. 9, 10.—Baptized infants are, in like manner, given back to their parents to be *nursed* for God. *Moses*,—"drawn out," Margin. His foster-mother caused him to be educated as a prince. See Acts vii. 22.

Reflections.—1. *Our times are in God's hands*.—While His enemies are devising mischief against His people, He secretly prepares the instruments of their deliverance. His working may not appear till their salvation seems impossible; but when man's time ends, God's time begins. He never comes too late to help.

2. *Trust in God is the truest bravery*.—His people are sometimes surrounded with such difficulties that, if everything is not hazarded, nothing can be had. For Jochebed to leave her child on the river, while she was able to hide him, would have been most wantonly to tempt God; but to do so in her utter helplessness, was bravely to trust Providence.

3. *All children are in danger*.—They are born in sin, and are "by nature children of wrath." Their parents

have no power to save them. The only Being who can, is the God who gave them. They must be given back to Him. They must be committed to the guidance and guardianship of His Providence. In infancy their friends may do this for them; but afterwards they must yield themselves to God. Unless they do so, they are in peril, and must perish.

4. *Little children may comfort and help their parents.*—Of this the sister of Moses is a good example. She acted with singular discretion; but she was, no doubt, "instructed of her mother." Much, however, depended on the little girl, and well did she perform her part.

Questions.—How many went with Jacob to Egypt? What is the book of Exodus about? What does "Exodus" mean? How long had Joseph been dead? Why did the Hebrews increase so fast? Why did this trouble Pharaoh? What did he do to check it? Whose son was Moses? How did they try to save him? Where did they put him? Who watched? Who found him? What followed?

Illustrations.—I. BRICK-MAKING IN EGYPT.

See Chap. i. 14. A contemporaneous testimony to this tributary service of the Israelites is still in existence in a picture found in the tomb of *Rochseere*, at Thebes. *Rosellini*, by whom it was first discovered, thus describes it:—"Some of the labourers are employed in transporting the clay in vessels, some in intermingling it with the straw; others are taking the bricks out of the form, and placing them in rows; still others, with a piece of wood upon their backs, and ropes on each side, carry away the bricks already burnt or dried. Their dissimilarity to the Egyptians appears at the first view; their complexion, physiognomy, and beard are proofs that we are not mistaken in supposing them to be Hebrews."

II. EGYPTIAN FIELD-LABOUR.

See Chap. i. 14. The cultivation of the soil in the lower districts of the Nile country, where the river overflows the land, is easy; but in the higher ground there are peculiar difficulties to be overcome. The water must be raised by artificial means before the land can be irrigated. The water was raised by the *pumping-wheel*, which resembled the wheels in our treadmills. Compare Deut. xi. 10; Zech. xiv. 18.

JANUARY 12.—Morning Lesson.

THE PROFIT OF GODLINESS.—Psalms i., iv.

For repetition, Psalm iv. 6—8.

Summary.—David describes the righteous and their reward, and the wicked and their punishment; prays for help; reproves his enemies; and shows where true happiness is to be found.

I. The Godly.—Ps. i. 1—3. *The counsel of the ungodly,*—their opinions, which they wish others also to hold. *Nor standeth,* &c.—Having rejected their principles, he shuns their company. *The scornful,*—those who ridicule religion and good people. *The law,* &c.,—the five books of Moses, for the Bible was then incomplete. *Planted by the rivers,*—and so never lacking moisture.

II. The Ungodly.—V. 4—6. Instead of being like a tree, the ungodly man is *like chaff. In the judgment,*—of the great day. *The congregation,* &c., —in heaven. *Knoweth the way,*—sees, approves, and prospers it. *Shall perish,* —and he with it. See Matt. vii. 13.

III. The Prayer.—Ps. iv. 1. *God of my righteousness.*—God alone can make sinners righteous. See Gen. xv. 6; Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; Rom. viii. 33; x. 3; Phil. iii. 9. *Enlarged me,*—set me at liberty.

IV. Reproof and Exhortation.—V. 2—5. *Turn my glory into shame,*—like the scornful, Ps. i. 1. *Leasing,*—lying. *For Himself,*—i.e., as His own property. See 2 Tim. ii. 19; 2 Peter ii. 9. *Stand in awe.*—Cherish a holy dread of God's wrath. *Commune with your own heart,*—examine yourselves. *And be still,*—lest ye be found fighting against God. *The sacrifices of righteousness*—i.e., such as are offered in penitence and faith.

V. What is Good.—V. 6—8. *Any good,*—anything that will yield true satisfaction. This is the cry of *many,*—even of all the race. *The light of Thy countenance,*—a sense of Thy favour.

This yields more *gladness* than sinners find in plenty of *corn and wine*. This enables us to *lie down and sleep*, confident in God's protection.

REFLECTIONS.—1. "*Evil communications corrupt good manners.*"—Shun the way of the wicked. Only be found in their company when seeking to do them good, or while engaged in your lawful calling.

2. *Scornful people are never good people.*—They who are full of scorn, are full of pride and bad feeling. Never make a jest of religion, or its professors.

3. *Avoid bad beginnings.*—He who adopts bad principles will keep bad company; and he who keeps bad company will learn bad ways.

4. *Love your Bibles.*—If David so much loved *his*, how ought we to love OURS!

5. *The wicked have no stability of principle, and no settled peace.*—The righteous are like a flourishing tree; the wicked like chaff. The tree is fruitful; the chaff is worthless. The tree is steadfast, and resists the storms that beat upon it; the chaff is driven hither and thither by every wind that blows.

QUESTIONS.—Who is "blessed?" What does he not do? first? second? third? In what does he "delight?" How does our Bible differ from David's? What is a godly man like? how? Who are the "ungodly?" What are they like? how? What will be their punishment? Why should we "stand in awe?" What are "sacrifices of righteousness?" What is "good?" why?

Illustration.—WATERING TREES.

See Ps. i. 3. "The ground (in gardens about Jaffa) is irrigated by rivulets, which are so ingeniously contrived, that a sufficient quantity of water flows round each tree and shrub to keep it in health and vigour. The allusion of the Psalmist is, doubtless, to such trees. The words 'rivers of water' are, according to the original, *divisions* of water. The same mode of irrigating is employed on the whole of the northern coast of Africa; and if a tree were deprived of the supply of water for any length of time, it would wither and decay."—*Ewald's "Missionary Labours in Jerusalem."*

JANUARY 12.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

"THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED."—Romans i. 1—23.

SUMMARY.—St. Paul speaks of his call; salutes his readers; desires to see them; purposes to do so; glories in the Gospel, and shows the need of it.

I. HIS CALL AND SALUTATION.—V. 1—7. *Called.*—Paul starts with this statement, lest his apostleship should be questioned because he was not one of the original "twelve." *Separated,*—not only for the work of the ministry, but to be a teacher of the highest class. *The Gospel of God,*—i.e., the Gospel sent by God,—"God's Gospel." *Which* (Gospel) *He had promised afore,*—i.e., long ages before it was actually given. *Concerning His Son Jesus.*—Christ is the great theme of the good news. *Which was made,*—or "born," *of the seed of David,*—also according to promise. *According to the flesh,*—i.e., in His human nature. *Declared to be the Son of God with power,*—i.e., powerfully declared to be God's Son. His *resurrection from the dead* was a powerful proof of this. For calling Himself "Son of God," He was crucified; but God, by raising Him from the dead, declared convincingly that He really was His Son. *The Spirit of Holiness,*—the Spirit to which holiness belongs as its essence,—i.e., in His Divine nature. He was at once the Son of David, and the Son of God. He was truly human, and truly Divine. *By whom,* &c.—The office of the *apostleship*, and the requisite *grace*, were conferred by Christ in order to bring about *obedience* to the *faith* (Acts vi. 7) *among all nations. For His name,*—i.e., for His name's sake. *Among whom,*—together with which nations. *To all,* &c.—To all Roman Christians.

II. HIS DESIRE TO VISIT ROME.—V. 8—15. *I thank my God.*—There were grave faults among these Roman believers; but Paul *first* blesses God for what was good in them. Compare 1 Cor. i. 4; Eph. i. 15, 16; Phil. i. 3, 4; Col. i. 3, 4; 1 Thess. i. 2. *Throughout the whole world,*—i.e., wherever the Gospel had gone. Their *faith* is put for their whole Christian life, ch. i. 19. *God is my Witness,*—as, in such a case no one

else could be. *In my spirit*,—i.e., sincerely. *Now at length*,—literally, "at last, some day or other." The good reports he had heard concerning them, led the Apostle to desire to visit them, and to pray that God would open his way. *Some spiritual gift*,—such as the preaching of the Gospel brings. They had begun well, but they needed to *be established*. *That I may be comforted*.—He wished to see them for his own sake, as well as theirs. *The mutual faith*,—the faith which each would see in the other. *Was let*, (or, "hindered,") *hitherto*,—i.e., by more pressing calls. See ch. xv. 20—22. *Some fruit*.—He wished to save souls and edify believers in Rome, *even as*, by God's blessing, he had done *among other Gentiles*. *Am debtor*.—The debt laid on him was the obligation to preach the Gospel. See 1 Cor. ix. 16. *Both to the Greeks*, &c., —that is, to all Gentiles, of whatever race, educated or uneducated.

III. The Gospel.—V. 16, 17. *Not ashamed of the Gospel*, — though the Jews cast me off, and the Gentiles ridicule me, on account of it. See 1 Cor. i. 23. Even in *Rome*, the mistress of the world, he could preach the Gospel without blushing for the lowliness of its origin. *The power of God*.—God's power accompanies it when preached; so that men are saved by it. *To the Jew first*,—because it was first preached to the Jews. *The Greek*,—every one who is not a Jew. *The righteousness of God*, —His way of justifying sinners. *From faith*,—trust in the atoning death of Jesus. *To faith*,—i.e., to him that believes; or, the more, the more we believe. *Shall live by faith*.—We are both justified by faith, and "stand" by means of it; for when we cease to believe, we cease to be *just*. See Hab. ii. 4.

IV. The Need of it.—V. 18—23. *Is revealed from heaven*,—in the punishments which God has made to follow upon sin. See v. 24, 25. *Who hold the truth*,—or, "who hold back the truth,"—i.e., hinder it. *That which may be known*,—or, "that which is known,"—i.e., *of God*, as the Creator, in every nation under heaven. *Is manifest in them*,—i.e., in their hearts. Every man has in him this knowledge. *For God hath showed it unto them*.—He so created the world, as to make it testify of Himself. *When they knew God*, &c.—Though He had so manifested Himself in His works, they did not recognise and worship Him as Creator of all. *Neither were thankful*, —for His gifts, but grossly abused them. *Vain in their imaginations*,—or, "reasonings," or "speculations." *Was darkened*.—They lost the little light they had. *To be wise*.—See 1 Cor. i. 22. *Became fools*.—The folly of idolatry is well represented in the next verse.

Reflections.—1. *Strive to excel in goodness*.—The heathen Romans were famous everywhere in fight: the Roman Christians were famous "throughout the whole world" in faith, v. 8. Which had the higher honour?

2. "*Pray without ceasing*."—The surest and shortest way to true success in anything, is to commit it to God in prayer. See Prov. xvi. 3. St. Paul would not undertake a journey without praying about it, v. 10.

3. *Never be ashamed of the Gospel*.—Get to understand it, and enjoy it. Talk much about it, practice it, and work for it. Others may ridicule you, but they will be silenced another day. See Prov. i. 25, 26. If you are ashamed of it, Christ will one day be ashamed of you. See Luke ix. 26.

4. *Try to send the Gospel to the heathen*.—The description given, v. 20 to v. 32, applies to millions of men now. The Gospel only can save them; and, according to our means and opportunities, we are bound to send it to all who have it not. In this sense we are "debtors," like the Apostle. See v. 14.

Questions.—To what was Paul "called?" How was he "separated?" What is the great subject of the Gospel? How was Jesus the Son of David? How is He the Son of God? How was He declared to be so? To whom was the Epistle sent? Why does Paul thank God for them? Why did he desire to see them? For what did he pray? What good did he expect to come of his visit? What had "hindered" him from going? To whom was he "a debtor?" how? How does he describe the Gospel? What does the Gospel reveal? How was "the wrath of God" revealed? How might the heathens have known God? Why did they not? How did they become "fools?"

Illustrations.—I. Paul's Call.

See v. 1. "The rest of the Apostles were educated by long intercourse with Jesus, and were called first to follow Him and obey Him, then put forth as Apostles. Paul,

beforetime a persecutor, was suddenly made an Apostle by special calling. In like manner the Jews were God's people by promise; the Greeks by simple calling. Thus the *called Apostle* had a similitude and relation to the *called saints.*"—*Bengel.*

II. BEAST-WORSHIP.

See v. 23. "Deities of the *human* form prevailed in Greece,—those of the *bestial* in Egypt. Both methods of worship were practised in Rome."—*Alford.* The *ox* was worshipped from its utility in agriculture, and was a symbol of the sun, and consecrated to him. Aaron chose, as the symbol of Deity, one with which the people had long been familiar in Egypt—the calf; embodiment of Apis, and emblem of the productive power of nature. Dagon, the god of the Philistines, was a human figure, terminating in a *fish.* Priapus had a human face with *goats'* ears. Pan was worshipped in Egypt in the form of a *he-goat.* Baalzebub was the *fly*-god. Nergal was worshipped under the form of a *cock;* Ashima as a *he-goat;* Nibhaz as a *dog;* Adrammelech as a *mule* or *peacock;* Anammelech as a *horse* or *pheasant;* and Nisroch, it is thought, as an *eagle.*

JANUARY 19.—Morning Lesson.

MORNING MEDITATION AND PRAYER.—Psalm v.

Summary.—David supplicates God's blessing at the beginning of the day; specifies the objects of God's aversion; and offers up three petitions.

I. Praying in the Morning.—V. 1—3. We saw, from the conclusion of Ps. iv., (January 12th,) that David retired to rest at night happy in God. We now see that, as he opens his eyes in the morning, his happiness continues. The first moments of the day he devotes to pious *meditation* and *prayer;* and asks God to accept both.

II. The Meditation.—V. 4—7. He meditates, (1,) on God's holiness: He has no *pleasure in wickedness;* He will not suffer *evil* long to prosper; He will not smile upon *folly;* He *hates all workers of iniquity.* (2.) On God's justice: He will *destroy* the *lying,* the *bloody,* or cruel, and the *deceitful.* (3.) On his own duty: he would publicly wait upon God, in a becoming spirit. *Into Thy house,*—i.e., the court of the tabernacle. *In the multitude of Thy mercy.*—Through the mercy he had already experienced in innumerable instances. *Thy holy temple,*—the holy of holies.

III. The Prayer.—V. 8—12. He prays, (1,) For guidance for himself. *In Thy righteousness.*—In all the duties Thy law enjoins. *Because of mine enemies,*—or, "because of those which observe me." (Margin.) *No faithfulness,* &c.—Their words may be friendly, but they are *flattering* words; for *their inward part,*—i.e., their heart,—is full of malice, and *their throat,* like *an open sepulchre,* is gaping for its prey. (2.) For misery upon the wicked. *Destroy Thou them,*—or, "Make them guilty." (Margin.) Or, as some good critics translate, "Thou wilt," &c. (3.) For joy in behalf of the righteous.

Reflections.—1. *God is King.*—David was a king, but God was *his* King. The Lord will not be a God (see Rev. xxi. 3) to any who will not obey Him as King.

2. *All need to pray.*—David found it necessary to pray, although he was king.

3. *All should pray in the morning.*—It is not enough to pray at night. In the morning we are the fittest for prayer; and, considering the dangers and temptations of the day, we have then most need of it.

4. *God has no pleasure in those who delight in sin.*

5. *Sin is folly.*—It is to prefer the will of our worst enemy to that of our best and wisest Friend.

Questions.—What made David so happy in the morning? What did he do on awaking? On what did he meditate? first? second? third? For what did he pray? first? second? third?

Illustration.—NEHILOTH.

The word is most likely taken from a Hebrew root, which signifies *to bore,* or *perforate;* so that it is the general term for perforated wind-instruments. The psalm, therefore, is dedicated to the conductor of that part of the temple-choir who played upon *flutes* and the like.

JANUARY 19.—Afternoon Lesson.

JESUS SHOWING FORTH HIS GLORY.—Mark i. 21—45.

For repetition, verses 29—31.

Summary.—Jesus preaches and works many miracles in Capernaum, and other parts of Galilee; and He is generally sought after.

I. Not as the Scribes.—V. 21, 22. *Straightway,*—or, "immediately," *on the* first *Sabbath* of His stay in Capernaum; not immediately after what is recorded above, for the calling of the Apostles, the Sermon on the Mount, the healing of the leper, and of the centurion's servant, preceded the miracle here described. *Astonished at His doctrine,*—it was so different from all they had heard before. *Not as the scribes,*—who only professed to expound or declare the will of God. Jesus spake as God Himself. *They* said, "Thus saith the Lord," "Thus says Moses," "Thus say the elders;" but He said, "Verily, verily, *I* say unto you."

II. A Demoniac.—V. 23—28. *In their synagogue.*—Jesus here confirms His authoritative teaching by a most convincing miracle. *With an unclean spirit,*—i.e., possessed by one. Sometimes he was beside himself; but, having now a lucid interval, he had been admitted into the synagogue. *He cried out,*—i.e., the evil spirit, using the man's organs of speech. *Let us alone.*—The demon uses the plural pronoun, speaking for all the devils. *To destroy us,*—i.e., before the appointed time. See Matt. viii. 29; and compare 2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6; and Rev. xx. 10. *I know Thee.*—Though the multitudes who followed Jesus only knew Him as *Jesus of Nazareth,* the evil spirit knew Him as *the Holy One of God.* See Ps. lxxxix. 18, 19; Dan. ix. 24; Acts iii. 14. *Hold thy peace.*—The testimony of this fallen angel might well pass for a proof of our Lord's Divinity, and of this the people yet needed to be convinced; but Jesus cut him short in giving it. He would make Himself known in due time; and would not suffer a devil to anticipate Him. Though about to be ignominiously cast out, the fiend would not quit his victim without a desperate attempt to destroy him. This was probably the first miracle of the kind performed by Jesus, and hence the excitement it produced. *What thing is this?*—Can such power be human? *What new doctrine is this?*—Is it not Divine?

III. Peter's Mother-in-law.—V. 29—34. *The house of Simon and Andrew.*—The latter lived with his married brother. *With James and John,*—probably, unmarried residents in the house. This was the home of Jesus, also, during His visits to Capernaum. See Matt. viii. 14; xvii. 24, 25. *Wife's mother,*—who was one of the family. *Ministered,*—acted as hostess. *At even.*—They waited till then because it was the Sabbath, (v. 21,) and the Sabbath ended at sunset, Lev. xxiii. 32. *All the city,*—crowds from all parts of Capernaum. *Many devils.*—The Jews of that day were, perhaps, the most wicked of nations; and God had suffered many fallen angels to range and tyrannize amongst them for their sins. *Because they knew Him.*—He did not yet wish to be generally known, and would not be supported by their testimony.

IV. Jesus in Secret.—V. 35—39. *Rising,*—from His bed in Peter's house. *A great while,* &c.,—it was probably, therefore, not long after midnight. *He went out,*—not having acquainted the family with His intention. *Into a solitary place.* He desired to be alone with His Father. *And there prayed,*—not only because He loved to pray, but for the salvation of men. Three times in this chapter we read of Him in secret places. Compare v. 12 and 45. *Followed.*—Awaking at daybreak, and finding Him gone, they went to seek Him. *Found Him.*—He had, doubtless, been to the same place before, and they knew where to find Him. *All men,* &c.—The inquiry is general. *Therefore came I forth.*—I am not sent to Capernaum alone. The Gospel is for all.

V. A Leper.—V. 40—45. *A leper,*—one afflicted with leprosy; a disease still common in the lands of the Bible. *Kneeling,*—in token of respect. *If Thou wilt.*—After all Jesus had done, there was no question as to His power.

He certainly *could*, but *would* He? *I will.* — He spoke as GOD, without appealing to any superior power. *Which Moses commanded.*—See Lev. xiv. 3, 4, 10. *A testimony unto them,*—i.e., to the people, who would not admit him to their fellowship unless a priest declared him cured. *Was without, in desert places,*— where there was less danger of a concourse besetting Him.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Going to church or chapel does not make Christians.* — A devil went to the synagogue at Capernaum.

2. *Christ chooses His own witnesses.* —He forbade the unclean spirit to declare the truth. Compare Ps. l. 16, 17.

3. *There is a faith which cannot save.* —"The devils believe," James ii. 19. How does your faith differ from theirs? They know Him as "the Holy One of God," but not as A SAVIOUR.

4. *To dislike having to do with Jesus is to be devil-like.*—The devil (v. 24) said, "What have we to do with Thee?" And all the devil's children say, in effect, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways."

5. *Give to God, and you will be the gainer.*—Peter would, probably, have had death in his house, if he had not entertained Jesus.

6. *Christians should imitate Christ.*— They should BE good, like Him, and DO good, like Him.

QUESTIONS.—How did Jesus teach? How did the scribes? What happened in the synagogue? How did the unclean spirit express his faith? his dislike? his fear? Why did Jesus stop his words? Where did Jesus lodge that night? what happened there? Where did He go next morning? why? Who followed Him?

Illustration.—DEMONIACS.

See v. 23. After examining other opinions, the Rev. Alfred Barry, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, says, "We are led to the ordinary and literal interpretation—that there are evil spirits, subjects of the Evil One, who, in the days of the Lord Himself, and His Apostles especially, were permitted by God to exercise a direct influence over the souls and bodies of certain men. This influence is clearly distinguished from the ordinary power of corruption and temptation wielded by Satan through the permission of God. . . The distinguishing feature of possession is the complete or incomplete loss of the sufferer's reason or power of will; his actions, his words, and almost his thoughts are mastered by the evil spirit, till his personality seems to be destroyed . . . Still, possession is only the special and, as it were, miraculous, form of 'the law of sin in the members.' (Rom. vii. 21—24.) Nor can it be doubted that it was rendered possible, in the first instance, by the consent of the sufferer to temptation and to sin . . . It was but natural that the power of evil should show itself, in more open and direct hostility than ever, in the age of our Lord and His Apostles, when its time was short."

JANUARY 26.—MORNING LESSON.

BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS. — Mark ii. 1—13.

For repetition, verses 9—11.

SUMMARY.—Jesus heals a paralytic, and forgives his sins; and the scribes inwardly charge Him with blasphemy.

I. PREACHING IN A HOUSE. — V. 1, 2. *Entered into Capernaum,*—where, at present, He chiefly resided, and which is, therefore, called "His own city," Matt. ix. 1. *After some days,*— passed in the "desert places," ch. i. 45. *It was noised.*—Though He could not "openly enter," (ch. i. 45,) His arrival soon became known. *In the house.*— This might be Peter's house, (ch. i. 29,) or it might be occupied by the relatives of Jesus, ch. iii. 19, 21. *No room.*—The house and its entry were full, and there was a crowd outside.

II. BELIEVERS.—V. 3—5. *Borne of four,*—one at each corner of his "bed," or couch, v. 11. *Uncovered the roof.*— The house, like all Jewish houses of the humbler class, was only one story high, and had a flat roof, which was reached by a staircase fixed outside. *Had broken it up.*—Some houses had a trap-door in the flat roof; but, probably, it was not so in the dwellings of the poor. In this case part of the roof itself was removed, Luke v. 19. *When Jesus saw their faith,*—i.e., the faith of the sick man and his friends.

They all had faith; but the faith of the sufferer himself was the most remarkable. His illness had doubtless led him to reflect upon his sins, and he had begged his friends to bring him to Jesus; for it is impossible to suppose that Jesus would pardon his sins while he was unconcerned about them.

III. Unbelievers.—V. 6, 7. *Reasoning in their hearts*,—fearing to express their thoughts. They knew His power of reply, and maintained a prudent silence. *Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies?*—Why usurps He a Divine prerogative? See Job xiv. 4; Isai. xliii. 25.

IV. A Double Cure.—V. 8—13. *Perceived in His spirit.*—To Him they had thought aloud. Compare John ii. 24, 25; Acts i. 24; Rev. ii. 23. *Whether is it easier*, &c.?—To men, neither is possible; but to God, neither is difficult. *But that ye may know*, &c.—To prove this He wrought the miracle. He healed him to show that He had power to pardon him. He pardoned him first, probably to draw the attention of the people to the great doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. *Went forth before them all*,—made whole, both in soul and body. *We never saw it on this fashion.*—No one had ever acted in this manner before. They were justly *amazed;* yet they thought Him only an extraordinary man: though, to forgive sin, to search the heart, and to remove the palsy with His word, proved Him to be truly God.

Reflections.—1. *Come to Jesus.*—He would gladly pardon all men. Has He pardoned you? Have you asked Him? You must come to Him,—through the door or through the roof,—in an ordinary or an extraordinary way. Faith, urged on by the anguish of a sin-sick soul, makes bold and wonderful ventures; and Jesus receives all comers.

2. *If you have come to Jesus, bring others.*—He was pleased with the faith of the sick man's friends; and He is equally pleased with the efforts His people make to bring sinners to Himself. By our faith, and intercessions, and good offices we all may be helpful to others.

3. *Jesus is the Heart-Searcher.*—He knew the thoughts of the scribes; and He knows your thoughts. It is vain to attempt to deceive Him. He knows us all as we really are. What does He know of you?

4. *When censured for doing good, consider the example of Jesus.* — How patiently He endured contradiction! See v. 7, 8, and compare Heb. xii. 4.

Questions.—Where did Jesus come from to Capernaum? Whose house did He enter? What brought the people together? Who was "borne" thither? how? why? How was he got to Jesus? What did Jesus say to him? why? What did the scribes think? How did Jesus know their thoughts? How did He answer them? What proofs of His Godhead did He give them? first? second? third? What did the people say?

Illustration.—opening the roof.

See v. 4. "The following considerations may make this act intelligible. We must banish from our minds every form of European houses. Those of Capernaum, as is evident from the ruins, were, like those of modern villages in the same region, low, *very low*, with flat roofs, reached by a stairway from the yard or court. Jesus, probably, stood in the open *lewan*, and the crowd were around and in front of Him. Those who carried the paralytic ascended to the roof, removed so much as was necessary, and let down their patient through the aperture. Examine one of these houses. The roof is only a few feet high, and, by stooping down, and holding the corners of the couch,—merely a thickly-padded quilt, as at present in this region,—they could let down the sick man without any apparatus of ropes or cords to assist them. And thus, I suppose, they did. The whole affair was the extemporaneous device of plain peasants, accustomed to open their roofs, and let down grain, straw, and other articles, as they still do in this country. The only difficulty is to understand how they could break up the roof without sending down such a shower of dust as to incommode our Lord and those around Him. I have often seen it done, and have done it myself to houses in Lebanon; but there is always more dust made than is agreeable. The materials now employed are beams about three feet apart, across which short sticks are arranged close together, and covered with the thickly-matted thorn-bush, called *bellan*. Over this is spread a coat of stiff mortar, and then comes the marl, or earth, which makes the roof. It is easy to remove any part of this without injuring the rest."—*The Land and the Book.*

JANUARY 26.—Afternoon Lesson.

MOSES IN MIDIAN.—Exodus ii. 11—25; iii. 1—14.

SUMMARY. — Moses, having killed an Egyptian, flees for his life. He serves as a shepherd in Midian, and marries. After forty years, the Lord appears to him, and commissions him to deliver Israel.

I. THE REJECTED CHAMPION.—Ch. ii. 11—14. The foster-son of the King's daughter,—the highly-gifted and well-educated youth,—might, no doubt, have risen, like Joseph, to the highest honours in the Egyptian State. But he felt within him a different call. See Heb. xi. 24—26. He felt a strong affection for his own people, and the sufferings of his *brethren* went to his heart. He believed himself called to be their deliverer; and hoped by this summary act of vengeance to gain influence and authority among his brethren. In this he was mistaken; for, two days afterward, when seeking to arbitrate between two of his countrymen, who were quarrelling, he was rudely thrust aside by *him that did the wrong*, who fiercely charged him with the murder of *the Egyptian*. Compare Acts vii. 23—29.

II. THE COURTEOUS EXILE.—V. 15—22. Forsaken by the people, and pursued by the King, Moses fled to the Midianites, an Arabian tribe descended from Abraham and his second wife. See Gen. xxv. 1—4. Resting *by a well*, after his long journey, Moses took the part of seven young shepherdesses against some of the ruffianly shepherds of the East. The father of these maidens was a priest, and a prince of the country; and he rewarded the courteous stranger with refreshment, employment, and a wife, selected from among his daughters. From the little that is known of *Zipporah*, we conclude that her character contrasted strangely with the meekness of her husband. Moses had learnt to *rule* in the court of Egypt: he must now learn to *serve*, in order to complete his training for the duties of his Divine vocation. While shepherding his flocks, however, in Midian, his heart was with his people. This appears from the name he gave to his first child, *Gershom*,—i.e., "a stranger here." (Margin.)

III. THE CRY OF THE NEEDY.—V. 23—25. While Moses was in Midian, matters did not improve in Goshen. The King died; but the principles of his government were carried out by his successor. And now first the Israelites showed signs of a deep agitation. It was not an attempt to defend themselves, or a plot to overthrow the government; but a movement of a far more powerful character. It was a disposition to call upon God, the Avenger of the oppressed, and the Friend of the friendless. They had *sighed*, and *cried*, and *groaned* enough before; but now that *their cry came up unto God*, the hour of their redemption drew nigh. *Remembered His covenant.*—See Gen. xv. 13, 14; xlvi. 4.

IV. A "GREAT SIGHT."—Ch. iii. 1—3. By forty years of shepherd-life in Midian, (Acts vii. 30,) the training of Moses for his great life-work was completed, and he was now ready to obey the call. *The mountain of God*,—Horeb, so called from what occurred upon it. See ch. xvii. 6; xxxiv. 2—7; Deut. iv. 15; v. 2. Sinai was its highest peak. *The Angel of the Lord.*—This Angel was God Himself, (v. 6,) and yet the Messenger of God. Jehovah and Jesus are one. See Mal. iii. 1. *A flame of fire.*—Fire is always used in Scripture as a symbol of Divine holiness. *A bush*,—literally, "a brier,"—a symbol of Israel, as a people despised by the world. It was a miracle that the fire did not consume the brier; and it was a miracle of mercy that God should dwell in a sinful community without destroying it. The burning bush was also a symbol of God's protection. Hitherto, any one might trample on the insignificant brier; but it could not henceforth be injured with impunity. See Zech. ii. 5. Pharaoh discovered this, to his cost.

V. HE "THAT DWELT IN THE BUSH."—V. 4—9. *God called unto him*,—with that Voice which had now been silent for a long period. *Put off thy shoes*,—an act of reverence, answering to our uncovering the head. Compare Josh. v. 15; Eccles. v. 1. *Was afraid to look upon God.*—So it has been in all manifestations of the Godhead, from that recorded in Gen. iii. 8, downwards.

VI. The Appointed Deliverer.—V. 10—14. *Who am I?*—Moses had become a different man during his exile. Formerly he was eager to deliver his people, and ran before he was sent; (ch. ii. 11, 12;) but now he shrinks from the Divine command, and seeks in every possible way to have himself excused. See, also, ch. iv. 1, 10, 13. The discipline of his desert-school had destroyed his old self-confidence; but it had failed to give him true confidence in God. *Upon this mountain.*—The burning bush itself was a convincing sign that God had sent him; and this would be perfectly clear when all the congregation of Israel came to worship on that very spot. This sign was to follow the fact. Compare 1 Sam. ii. 34; 2 Kings xix. 29; Matt. xii. 39, 40. *What shall I say unto them?*—It was some hundreds of years since God had manifested Himself to the fathers. Moses, therefore, asked Him for some *name*, to be used as the watchword of the coming conflict, and held up as a banner to lead them to victory. I am that I am,—that is, the Self-existent and Eternal One. Compare John viii. 58.

Reflections.—1. *Self-confidence soon yields to cowardice.*—Moses was ready to kill and slay, but God refused that kind of service; and he who had been so bold, gave way to despondency, and fled at the very first failure.

2. *God's ways are not as our ways.*—The means which Moses thought most likely to rescue his people from misery, only brought him into misery himself; and the events which seemed to carry him away from his great work, were those which opened the right way for its accomplishment.

3. *God is faithful to His engagements.*—It is common to think no more of promises, when it has become difficult to perform them. Men often forget their friends when in affliction. It never is so with God. He observed the wrongs His people suffered. He had foretold their bondage, and promised them deliverance many years before. He was faithful to His covenant; and all His promises will be fulfilled with the same certainty.

4. *Be very reverent before God.*—All good men have always been so. At chapel and at home, in all you say or think concerning God, remember who He is, and what you are.

Questions.—Why did Moses kill the Egyptian? What did he expect this would lead to? How did he discover his mistake? Where did he go? What happened at the well? What did this lead to? What aid did the Israelites secure? how? Who appeared to Moses? when? where? how? What did the burning bush betoken? Why was Moses to take off his shoes? What was he to do? Why did he object? How was he encouraged?

Illustrations.—I. TAKING OFF THE SHOES.

See ch. iii. 5. "No heathen would presume to go on holy ground, or enter a temple, or any other sacred place, without first taking off his sandals. Even native Christians, on entering a church or chapel, generally do the same thing. No respectable man would go into the house of another without having first taken off his sandals, which are generally left at the door, or taken inside by a servant."—*Roberts' "Oriental Illustrations."*

II. THE FOOLISH CHICKEN.

One of my friends was letting his chickens out of their coop, to run at large, for a few moments, before night. For this he removed one or two slats on the top of the coop. At once all flew eagerly up, and through the hole thus made,—all but one. He, poor thing, did not see the door by which the others escaped, and tried in vain to join them. Here, there, everywhere, he rushed. He tried every place except the right one, uttering all the time piteous cries. "Foolish thing," said my friend, "he is too stupid to look up!" How many times it is just so with us. The way out of all our difficulties is upward. This is the passage into liberty and blessedness. Our Father has opened it; but how slow we are to perceive it! We cry, we struggle, we fly here and there; but all in vain. We do not see that only way of escape which Infinite Love has opened from above. We are *too stupid to look up.*

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THE
WESLEYAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

INTERESTING TEACHING:

A WORD OF ADMONITION.

WE take it for granted that Sunday-school teachers are anxious to do their work in the best manner possible, that they duly estimate its importance and responsibility, and intend (so far as their own diligence is concerned) to be workmen that need not to be ashamed. Unless this be the case, they lack one of the first requisites for their office. But, if they properly understand and regard their work, they will not be content with merely hearing a lesson repeated, or propounding some formal and ill-prepared instruction to their class, but will try to be impressive, and aim at making all they say tell upon the minds and hearts of their scholars. One very important step toward this end is to make their teaching interesting. Next to earnestness and love in the teacher, this is, perhaps, chiefly to be desired. The truths which the Sunday-school teacher has to impart are of the most vital importance; to make those truths as attractive as they are important,—and thus, thoroughly to interest his scholars in them,—is no contemptible achievement. It is a noble aim, an end worthy of the teacher's best endeavours; for, when once the children are interested, the battle is half won. If their earliest sympathies are enlisted on behalf of the true and the good, they are not likely to grow up caring "for none of these things."

We have often thought that the phrase,—"plain truth," has done much mischief, both to the pupil and Sunday-school. In their earnest desire to make the truth plain, men are in some danger of stripping it of all beauty, and presenting it to us in a fashion calculated to repel rather than to attract. A specious fallacy often lurks in an expression; and, undoubtedly, it is so sometimes with that in question: men think they have done a good thing if only they have made the truth what they call "plain," but are often blind to the fact that they may, at the same time, have done unwisely, by also making it repulsive,—bald and bare, cold and hard, dull and dry. Children frequently have active imaginations and ready sympathies; they can, and do, appreciate the beauty of well-chosen verses of poetry, interesting anecdotes, or telling illustrations.

We would not feed their bodies exclusively upon dry bread, even though it were made from "the finest of the wheat;" neither let us condemn their minds to a dry and wearisome diet of miscalled "plain truth." The teaching of the Great Teacher, while usually simple in its doctrinal statements, is rich and varied in its illustrations; and "the common people heard Him gladly."

If a teacher only aimed at making his duty pleasant, at saving himself from annoyance and weariness, he would find himself repaid for any pains he might take to render his lesson interesting. How different the work of teaching an interested class and an uninterested one! What a contrast between the kindling eyes, eager faces, and quiet attention of the one; and the dull, stolid apathy of the other, only relieved by occasional (or frequent) mischief-making, and taxing all the powers of the unfortunate teacher to maintain order and discipline.

But much higher results will often follow from successful effort to interest the scholars. What teacher has not had occasion to lament over some of his scholars, who have been enticed to spend the Sunday afternoon rambling in the fields, with godless, and often profane, companions? To interest them in what is going forward in the class will help to guard them against such temptations, and will draw them to the school; and this influence, a counter-attraction to the temptations that beset youth, becomes especially necessary as the scholars advance in years and intelligence: even for young children attractive teaching is most desirable, but for youths just beginning to have their own way, (often too soon for their own good,) such instruction becomes an absolute necessity, if the Sabbath-school is to retain its hold upon them. To any one who has a practical acquaintance with Sunday-schools we need not enlarge upon the importance of this point: from a dull teacher, who comes with an unstudied, and therefore dull, lesson, how easy to turn away to the fields, especially on a bright summer afternoon. Then come the habitual Sunday stroll, bad company, religious, and often temporal, ruin.

Another reason for making the Sunday lesson attractive, by all lawful means, is to be found in the excellence of the teaching now given to many of our scholars in day-schools. There the children are taught from week to week by men and women who have carefully studied the art of gaining a child's attention, and of awakening in its mind an interest in what they teach; who do not merely give "precept upon precept, line upon line," but who know how to bring into play the mental faculties of their scholars, and seldom

rest until the minds of their pupils are aroused to care for the subject in hand, and to deal with it for themselves. It is a sad thing if the Sunday teaching be found dull and formal, while the Monday lesson is full of interest. The Sabbath-school teacher will find, in the master and mistress of the day-school, either most valuable auxiliaries or most formidable competitors.

We trust the reader will not mistake our meaning: we certainly do *not* intend to insist upon the cultivation of rhetoric by Sunday-school teachers; flowing periods and an elaborate style are quite superfluous as far as their work is concerned: least of all do we wish them to attempt—

"To dress up truth with artificial flowers:"

nor should "an interesting lesson" be, in itself, the principal aim of the teacher. Interest in the lesson is to be sought as a means to an end; sought in the first place, it is true, but holding only a second rank in the teacher's mind and purpose: his great aim is to do the children good; and they are to be pleased, in order that they may be more effectually taught; and only so far as pleasing them will conduce to that end. The teacher is to set before himself the example of St. Paul, who pleased men "for their good, to edification." Never let unworthy concessions be made to any childish impatience of instruction and restraint. Never let religious teaching be sacrificed to mere amusement. The lesson is to be made interesting and attractive, if possible; but its sacred character must be preserved throughout, and instruction of a distinctly religious nature must be imparted, and must be kept pre-eminent. If the "tale" be "adorned," it is only that the "moral" may be more effectually "pointed;" if the teaching be rendered pleasurable, it is "for this cause," that it may the more readily become profitable. The teacher should be greedy of practical result, covetous of spiritual success, and his efforts to give pleasure and awaken interest are to be strictly subordinated to the one great end, which is, to find a readier entrance for that Divine truth which is able to make even children "wise unto salvation."

Some teachers, we grieve to say, seem to lose sight of this last-named aspect of the question; perhaps they have never considered its vital importance. Unable to command the attention and interest of their classes, they get through the lesson in less than the allotted time, and the remainder is spent in reading aloud to the class some light serial of a semi-religious character; and, at times, decidedly at variance with Methodist doctrine: others yield to the

clamorous request of the children, and "tell them stories!" Both of these courses are extremely questionable; they may make the teacher popular with the children for a time; but such popularity will often be gained at the expense of real usefulness: each of them departs widely from the purpose for which Methodist Sunday-schools were established; and, if adopted to any considerable extent, both of them tend to make Sunday-schools into a great sham. "But the children like stories," some one will answer, "and may be not only pleased but profited by them." Undoubtedly so; but let the story be interwoven with the lesson, and let all its interest be thrown into the lesson; let it be used as a help to the teacher in his great work of fastening sacred truth upon the minds of his charge. The story should always be incorporated with the lesson; and, if it will not bear that, had better not be told at all. Stories separated from the lesson, and set off against it, are mischievous in their tendency,—they help to make it appear irksome; and if the children can persuade a teacher to hurry or curtail the Scripture-lesson, in order that he, or she, may amuse them afterwards, they have gained a victory over discipline, and over that teacher's authority. It is not pleasant to say so; but we greatly fear that, in some schools, what with the disuse or neglect of the Catechisms, and what with curtailing Scripture-lessons, in order to make way for trivial reading and story-telling, very little distinct and systematic religious instruction is given; and that a careful examination of the scholars individually (which should be privately conducted, by some well-qualified person) would frequently disclose a very painful amount of ignorance, even of primary religious truth. We beseech our friends, the Sunday-school teachers, to "suffer the word of exhortation." We have often heard them assured, with much earnestness, on anniversary and festival occasions, how useful and important their services are; perhaps he may be as true a friend, and may have their success as sincerely at heart, who faithfully points out faults and dangers, and suggests possible improvements in Sunday-schools.

"But how are we to make our teaching interesting to our scholars?" is likely to be asked; and the question is, certainly, a fair one. In the few hints that follow, the subject is by no means exhausted: every teacher's own common sense, if applied to the task, may suggest to him some additional, and, perhaps, better means of improving his teaching and interesting his class; but we would venture to recommend, among other things, that the teacher should try to think and feel *with* his scholars. We do not mean that

he should talk childish nonsense to them; but he certainly should not talk to them as to grown men. To some extent he may both think "as a child," and speak "as a child," with great advantage. The Sunday-school teacher often lives such a different life from that of his class, and (unless he is of the number who regard thinking as superfluous labour) often moves in such a different atmosphere of thought, that it may have become rather difficult for him to put a thing clearly before their minds, while yet it appears plain enough to himself. Religious phrases, for example, and many idiomatic terms frequently used in common conversation, convey no meaning whatever to the mind of many a child; yet we have frequently heard them used without explanation, or question as to their meaning, as if the children could not fail to understand them! With the younger children, especially, the teacher may gain by recalling his own early days, and trying to catch the tone of his little pupils' thoughts. It will do him, personally, no harm to feel "as a child" now and then. We scarcely expect grown people to be much interested by that which is decidedly above their comprehension; yet this is sometimes required of poor little children.*

Of course the lesson cannot be made interesting to the class, if it be not previously studied by the teacher. It is a standing rule that *unstudied* preaching is *uninteresting* preaching. The rule will also apply, we are persuaded, to the instructions given by the Sabbath-school teacher. If he be not interested in them himself, how can he expect to interest his class? If he be really in earnest to do them good, he will try thoroughly to comprehend the lesson, and not carelessly assume that he "knows all about that." He will settle beforehand *what* he means to teach, and then try to gather round the subject some thoughts which may secure the attention and arouse the interest of his class. Let him not disdain to cull from his own reading, week by week, "something that will please the children." Anything that will bear upon the lesson,—history, travels, select poetry, and even the newspapers, may be laid under contribution, if only (and "only" is a great word) the selection be judicious. But let the teacher beware of lengthened and wearisome extracts. All that he gathers should be *prepared* as well as gathered,

* Some of Mrs. Sewell's ballad-stories are beautiful specimens of the way in which a cultivated mind may think and feel *with* children, and *for* them, apart from puerility. The late Miss Jane Taylor's "Hymns for Infant Minds" are incomparable efforts in the same direction; but they have been for some time out of print, and, we fear, are so still.

—ground in his own mill. But here, as elsewhere, there is no royal road to success. Manuals and handbooks may be very valuable *aids*, but they will not save the teacher the trouble of doing his own work: there is no facile prescription which will accomplish wonders, no matter what may be the circumstances of the case. Success will only be the reward of labour: success may be preceded by a variety of failures, and much perseverance may be required. Still, the difficulties have been overcome again and again, and the task is not so supremely hard that any man who loves trying to do good need despair of success.

Above all, the teacher who desires to win attention, that he may ultimately win *souls*, will seek help from above. He will make each Sunday's duty, each Sunday's lesson, the subject of sincere and earnest prayer; and thus a blessing will rest upon his labours such as no mere preparation, however exact and careful, apart from prayer, can secure. Thoughts and words, better than his own, will be given to him as he does his work, and will be accompanied by a Divine influence upon the hearts of his youthful charge. Let him plead for help in his sacred labour, that he, also, may bring "young children to Jesus," and he will not, surely, pray in vain.

AMICUS.

"THE GOOD SHEPHERD."

CHRIST is called by many significant names in the Bible; but there is, perhaps, none which better illustrates His life than His own saying, "I am the Good Shepherd." It cannot be time misspent if we look at the character in which our blessed Redeemer makes Himself known to us in this parabolical representation. In order to be a "good shepherd," certain qualities are indispensable. The following are a few of these:—

He must be kind to his flock.—He will listen to their cry, and, with a ready hand and a warm heart, will strive to supply their every need. The expression "good shepherd" at once suggests the idea of kindness to the sheep. And need we observe how loving and compassionate Jesus Christ is to His flock? He is ever studying their comfort, administering to their happiness, and shielding them from enemies. He gathers "the lambs with His arms," and carries "them in His bosom," and "gently leads" the nursing ewes. He came from heaven to seek and to save "the lost sheep." He suffered death to redeem them; He now lives to bless, defend, and plead for them; and, when they die, He will tenderly take them to Himself, that they may behold His glory, and "enter into" His "joy."

One mark of a "good shepherd" is skill and experience in the management of his sheep.—He will understand their habits, and will know the circumstances and manner of life to which their nature is adapted. He will give them the food most suitable for them. If diseases to which they are subject visit them, he skilfully applies proper remedies. With all these particulars of our need

Jesus is well acquainted: He thoroughly understands our nature, for He has graciously taken it into union with His own Divine nature; He can heal all our spiritual maladies, however deeply rooted they may be. We may know very plainly, and feel very acutely, the circumstances and necessities of our lives; but the "Good Shepherd" knows how we are placed better than we do ourselves. He, too, furnishes the supplies needful for us in a suitable manner, and at suitable times; He "will give grace and glory," and "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." In all His dealings with us we see unequalled skill and experience.

A "good shepherd" will know his sheep, and will be able to distinguish them from those of other flocks, if they get mingled. It is truly surprising to see how perfectly well the shepherds, in Eastern countries, know their sheep. It is not difficult for them to separate their flocks when numbers are mixed together. It frequently happens that three or four flocks are grazing in one valley; the sheep mingle as though they all belonged to one fold, and had only one shepherd. When the shepherds desire to depart, they call their sheep by name; (for every sheep has its name;) and their call is instantly obeyed. The sheep are to be seen running each to its own shepherd, and in a little time they are all ready to go their way. It is also worthy of remark that the sheep must be called by their own names, and by their own shepherd, or they will not attend.

Not long since, a man in India was accused of stealing sheep. He was brought before the judge, and the supposed owner of the sheep was also present. Both claimed the sheep, and had witnesses to prove their claims, so that it was not easy for the judge to decide to which of them the sheep belonged. Knowing the customs of the shepherds, and the habits of the sheep, the judge ordered the sheep to be brought into court, and sent one of the two men into another room, while he told the other to call the sheep, and see if it would come to him; but the poor animal, not knowing the "voice of a stranger," would not go to him. In the meantime, the other man, in the adjoining room, growing impatient, and probably suspecting what was going on, gave a kind of a "chuck;" upon which the sheep bounded away toward him at once. This "chuck" was the way in which he had been used to call the sheep; and it was at once decided that he was the real owner.

How beautifully this illustrates our Lord's words, "and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers... I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." They may be little cared for, or even entirely overlooked and despised, by the world; but the Saviour knows them well. He knows where they are, and at the last day will publicly acknowledge them as the sheep of His fold.

A "good shepherd" will be able to defend his sheep.—Such is Jesus. His people are surrounded by enemies, and often have little to expect, in the way of comfort and help, from earthly sources, in the time of need. But they derive encouragement from the fact, that He who is on their side is mightier far than all that are against them; His own words cheer and comfort them. "I give unto them," He says, "eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand."

Sabbath-school teachers will do well to rely more fully upon the "Good Shepherd" for wisdom, in their endeavours to do good to the souls of the

young committed to their care. They are in the position of under-shepherds; and as a shepherd, in a sense, is answerable to his master for the safety of the sheep, so is the teacher, in a measure, responsible to God for the children placed under him. Our Saviour has set us a noble example of kindness and love. As His sheep we are perfectly safe and kindly cared for; all our wants are supplied, and in danger we are ever protected. How great the privilege of belonging to the fold of Christ! Let our gratitude find a channel in the Sabbath-school; let us labour to allure the children by love; let us strive to win their affections by kindness; let us patiently watch over, and pray for, them: we shall then be entitled to expect good results, and lambs will be gathered to the fold of Christ. T. Bill.

Into a desolate land,
White with the drifted snow,
Into a weary land,
Our truant footsteps go:
Yet doth Thy care, O Father,
Ever Thy wanderers keep;
Still doth Thy love, O Shepherd,
Follow Thy sheep.

Over the pathless wild
Do I not see Him come?—
Him who shall bear me back,
Him who shall lead me home?
Listen! between the storm-gusts,
Unto the straining ear
Comes not the cheering whisper,
"Jesus is near?"

Over me He is bending!
Now I can safely rest,
Found at the last, and clinging
Close to the Shepherd's breast.
So let me lie till the fold-bells
Sound on the homeward track,
And the rejoicing angels
Welcome us back!

—*W. E. Littlewood.*

A WARNING FACT:

FOR CHRISTIAN YOUNG WOMEN ESPECIALLY.

M—— G—— was the daughter of pious parents, who endeavoured, both by example and precept, to bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." Five of the seven walked in the way to heaven, and on their death-beds testified faith in Christ Jesus as their Saviour.

When M—— was little more than four years old, the Holy Spirit began to strive with her; and the sobs and cries of the child, after she had retired to rest, frequently summoned her mother to her bedside. She would, at such times, implore her mother to pray that God would make her fit for heaven. These prayers, her parents believe, God graciously heard and answered; since, for several years, her life bore testimony that she was trying in all things to follow in her Saviour's footsteps.

As she grew into womanhood, her amiable disposition and pleasing manners drew round her a large circle of friends. At the house of one of these acquaintances M—— met a gentleman, upon whom she could not fail to discover that she had made a deep impression. From this time she frequently met him at her friend's house; but, knowing that her parents would not approve of her intimacy with a person who made no profession of personal religion, and who held Unitarian sentiments, she kept the fact of her acquaintanceship a secret from them. At the request of this friend she read several books relating to Unitarian doctrines. At first she clearly saw their errors; but by little and little her mind became blinded; until, at last, she declared herself a professed believer in all the errors of that heterodox community.

Although there was a long struggle before she could stifle the strivings of the Holy Spirit, at length she partially

succeeded in doing so. Previously to this, she had consented to become the wife of this young man. The effects of her backsliding soon became manifest to her anxious parents. Instead of being a happy, cheerful Christian, she was becoming a gloomy misanthrope.

One departure from the right path is, alas! too frequently followed by another, and another. M——'s parents, though always happy to give their children any reasonable enjoyments within their power, had never allowed them to frequent balls or theatres. Knowing this, M—— took advantage of the absence of her father and mother from home to accompany her intended husband to the theatre. Shortly after the commencement of the play, feeling unwell, she expressed a desire to leave the theatre. This was complied with; but, on reaching the top of the stairs, her foot slipped, and she was precipitated to the bottom. Her lover, in an agony of alarm, conveyed the unfortunate girl home; but consciousness only fully returned for a few minutes before she breathed her last.

She lingered in great pain for three days, almost constantly repeating, "They shall call, but I will NOT answer;" a passage of Scripture which had been urged by her affectionate mother as a plea to induce her to come back to that Saviour whom she had so wickedly resolved to deny. The horrors of that death-bed may be more easily imagined than described. M——'s heartbroken parents, in the short interval of consciousness, endeavoured to point her to the Lamb of God. But life was fast ebbing out. Her last words were, "*It is too late! I resolved I would drown the voice of my conscience, and now all is dark! dark!*"

Thus this unhappy girl died! While first listening to her suitor, her conscience over and over again whispered, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;" but she disregarded it, and went on sinning, until, at last, death was the result of her disobedience. May these facts be a solemn warning to all of us not to listen to the voice of the tempter; lest, on the verge of the unseen world, we, too, have, with M——, to exclaim, "IT IS TOO LATE!" C. B.

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

OUR SCHOLARS WATCH US.

I WAS early at my post, one Sabbath morning; but I found John there before me. His peculiarly happy smile told of great joy and peace within; for he had, some months before, opened his heart to the Lord Jesus.

After a few words of greeting, I said, "John, I am glad to see you are so near the Saviour this morning."

"Yes, I do feel very happy; but how did you know it?"

"Ah, I can tell, as soon as I look into your face, when you are happy," I said.

He smiled, and looked as if he wished to say something; but could hardly speak it.

"What is it, my boy?" I asked. "Did you wish to tell me something?"

"Yes, teacher; I was going to say I can always tell when you are close to Jesus, too."

"How can you tell?" I asked.

"O! by your looks, one way; and then, by the way you talk to us."

Just then the rest of the class came in, and the subject was dropped; but those few words frequently came back to me during the day, "I can tell when you are close to Jesus."

I had often scanned each face to see if the love of Christ lighted up the eye,

or if the tear of penitence welled up from the heart. So long had I been with them, so well had I known them, that I thought I could tell much of the heart by the outward appearance; but John had learned to do the same. He had been watching me, and could tell when I was "close to Jesus." I knew that my pupils watched my conduct to see if precept and example went together. I knew they watched my words when I spoke of Jesus; but I knew not that they watched my very looks. I had not expected this. I had not thought that they felt the difference when I came with my heart warmed by communion with Jesus; or only with a closely studied, but prayerless, lesson.

Those few words made me feel more vividly that, if I would have them "close to Jesus," I must be there myself.

Teachers, our scholars are watching us. Do they see that we are near to Jesus? We must lead, if we wish them to follow.

SCHOOL METHODS.

HOW TO USE A BLACKBOARD.

Teachers of infant and juvenile classes may probably find some useful hints in the subjoined extract from a speech by Mr. Moody, of Michigan:—

"They had a large blackboard, six or eight feet long, and four or five feet wide, and they took a piece of chalk, and catechised the children. Suppose the lesson was about the transfiguration, they would say, 'Now, children, how many persons were there mentioned?' They were now so trained that they were prepared for this exercise, and they would find out before they came to school, because they wanted to be able to answer. 'There were Peter, and James, and John, and Jesus.' 'Very well; let us put them down. Which shall we put down first?' They would say, 'Jesus.' 'Very well. Now, what name shall we put next to Jesus? Whom do you think we ought to put next to Him?' One would say, 'Peter;' another 'John.' 'Why John?' 'Because John was the favourite disciple.' 'Well; whom next?' One would say 'Peter;' another 'James.' 'Which will you fix upon?' They would, perhaps, decide on Peter. Then they would be asked, 'Who else was there on that mountain, in that great council, the most important ever held on earth?' 'Moses and Elias.' 'Well, put them down. No one else?" Then they would all be set thinking, and by-and-by they would say, 'God was there.' Then, having referred to a certain council of war when some well-known great personages met in front of a large city, and spent the whole night in the consideration of what was to be done, they would show how infinitely more important this council was at which Moses and Elias were present. Then the children would be asked, 'What did they talk about? Have your teachers told you?' He remembered one child said, 'They spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.' In this way the lesson was learnt so that it was never forgotten."

Mr. Moody then illustrated the mode of using the blackboard. In dealing with the text which stated that Jesus, in going from Jerusalem up into Galilee, must needs pass through Samaria, the board would be used to show the positions of the three places, and the spot where the "well" was would be marked out. It was astonishing how many subjects could be made interesting in this way. On one occasion he took the Parable of the

Ten Virgins, and, before explaining it, said, "Now, I shall want you presently to think what is the most solemn clause or sentence in this whole parable." After the lesson, one of the children said the most solemn thought seemed to him to be that "the door was shut." Another little boy, with tears trickling down his cheek, got up, and said, "I think there is something more solemn than that. It is the part in which the Saviour says, 'I know you not.'" Here were, indeed, two texts to talk upon; and, after conversing some time upon them, the children began to pray, when one little boy said, "O, God! forbid that we shall find the door shut. God forbid that we shall ever hear the words 'I know you not.'"

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

February 9.—SECTION II., QUESTION VI.

Rare Flowers made Common.

A GENTLEMAN, residing in the North Riding of Yorkshire, had a garden, in the cultivation of which he took great delight. He was not engaged in any kind of trade or profession, having sufficient money to provide for his wants. He had, therefore, much time at his own disposal, and employed a great part of it in his garden. Perhaps, considering the good that he might have done to his neighbours less favourably circumstanced than himself, he spent too much money and time in beautifying his garden. He found, however, great delight in having flowers, vegetables, and fruits superior to those of his acquaintances. This gentleman was one day asked his opinion concerning a lady who had only lived a few years in that neighbourhood. He replied that her conduct, in one respect, often grieved him. "She is a very worthy person, no doubt; but she often sadly vexes me. If a new flower is raised, and she gets a root, it is sure to be common in a season or two; for she gives away to everybody as fast as she can." Such was the view taken of Mrs. S—— by her neighbour. Thirty years afterwards, however, when both had passed into the unseen world, Mrs. S——'s daughter cherished these and similar reminiscences of her mother's kindness, and wished, in this respect, to be like her. In God we have an all-perfect goodness to imitate.

Feb. 16.—SECT. III., QUEST. I.

Undesirable Lodgings.

ONE day, in a large village at the foot of the Yorkshire Wolds, some men were seen carrying a burden, of which they were very anxious to be rid. They were taking a well-dressed "gentleman" from place to place, wishful to deposit him in some spot where he would be out of danger. The man had fallen down in the village-street, not in apoplexy, or any other kind of fit, but because he had made himself so drunk that he could neither walk nor stand. His friends took him to a public-house, and asked that he might remain there until he had recovered his senses; but the landlord refused, declaring that the wretched man had not bought the liquor at his house. At length the kind men, who were trying to save him from further harm, obtained permission from another publican to lay the poor drunkard in the stable. Now, as we have said, he was well dressed. He was also very respectably connected; he had received a very costly education; he was a medical man, and, when sober, was very clever. When mounted on his horse he might have been taken for a nobleman, his appearance was so dignified; but he had no self-control. On the occasion referred to, he had just enough consciousness to perceive that it was a stable into which he was being carried, and to object to his lodgings. But he was laid on the straw, and fell asleep. Worst of all, he afterwards yielded more and more to temptation, and at length died in a very awful manner. We can only be happy and holy by obtaining and using the grace of God.

Feb. 23.—SECT. III., QUEST. II.

The Holy Angels.

SOME scholars in a Sabbath-school were learning the meaning of the Lord's prayer. They had reached the petition, "Thy will

be done in earth as it is in heaven." They were then asked, "How do you think the angels and glorified saints do the will of God in heaven?" One said, "They do it immediately;" a second, "They do it diligently;" a third, "They do it always;" a fourth, "They do it with all their hearts;" a fifth, "They do it altogether." A pause ensued. At length a little girl added, "They do it without asking any questions."

March 1.—Sect. III., Quest. III.

Richard Cecil.

When the Rev. Richard Cecil was but a little boy, his father had occasion to go to the India-House, and took his son with him. While the business was being transacted, the little fellow was dismissed, and told to wait for his father at the door, near which he was placed. His father's mind was so fully engrossed with the affair in hand, that, when it had been completed, he had forgotten all about Richard; and, leaving the place by another door, did not see him. The day passed over before Richard was thought of. The father said, "You may depend on it that the dear boy will be found just where I left him." So it was. Richard could not explain, yet could obey.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

February 9.—Sect. VI., Quest. XXI.

Holy Tempers.

The lovely dispositions which are created within the souls of true believers are like beautiful and fragrant flowers in a garden. All who behold them are constrained to admire them. We may, occasionally, have been in a garden in which we were quite bewildered by the multitude and variety of the flowers. The rich hues and sweet scent around us were delightful. But we could not count the flowers, and should have found it difficult to give anything like an adequate description of the garden's wealth. So, within a sanctified soul there is great variety of moral beauty. We can only glance at the selection made for us in this answer.

Meekness.—We are to learn of Christ how to be meek under provocation. Let us study one passage in our Lord's history. He was journeying to Jerusalem. The time was approaching when He was to die for the sins of the world. He knew this, and was going to the appointed place. He had to pass through Samaria. He wished to lodge at night in one of the villages of Samaria. Did the people refuse to receive Him. Why did they do so? What did James and John propose? Was it not really very unkind in these Samaritans? What did Jesus say? (Luke ix. 51—56.)

Patience.—After the ascension of our Lord, were the sufferings of his disciples severe? Who was stoned to death? Who was slain with the sword? Who were thrust into prison? Would it have been right for these sufferers to have murmured against God's Providence? Their trials were very painful; but they were required to be patient. They would then enjoy peace within.

Kindness.—Can kind people do all the good to those around them that they would like to do? How much good are they to do? Will God be pleased with their doing as much as they can? Are there any people to whom the disciples of Christ are to be specially kind? Can you mention the name of a good woman, in olden time, who used to make clothes for the poor? Dorcas meetings have their name from her. (Acts ix. 36—41.)

Exercises.—Is it possible for our souls to be filled with holy tempers? Who can place such within us? How ought we to seek such help from the Holy Ghost? In whose name should we pray for this Divine influence?

Feb. 16.—Sect. VI., Quest. XXII.

Husbands and Wives.

It is pleasant to look upon an aged man and wife, who have been many years in each other's society, striving to help each other on in the way to heaven. When the way was sunny and smooth, they could sing together, and when the path was stormy and rough, they could console each other; and, under all circumstances, they were cheered by the conviction that each step brought them nearer to the heavenly land. Do we not find such a worthy couple in the parents of John the Baptist? What was the name of the Baptist's father? What was the name of the Baptist's mother? We read

concerning Zacharias and Elisabeth that, when they were advanced in life, "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke i. 6.)

Husbands should love their wives.—In heathen lands men often treat their wives like beasts of burden. They make women carry the heavy loads, and do all the drudgery. Is that loving their wives? In England, too, many men leave their wives, and go to the public-house to waste their wages. So the poor woman has to work at home without suitable food, and to fear the return of a drunken husband, made brutal by strong drink? Is such conduct a mark of love? Some have kind words for other people, but not for their wives. Is that right?

Wives should obey their husbands.—Of course no woman ought to sin against God to please her husband, or anybody else. But there are many things in which husband and wife may differ in opinion, wherein no sin is involved. If they talk the matter over kindly, most likely they will generally come to be of the same mind; but when they cannot see alike, and one must give way, the wife should cheerfully do so. If both are really loving, this will not be felt a hardship.

EXERCISES.—Can any home be happy if the husband is not loving towards his wife? Can any home be happy if the wife be self-willed and obstinate? Is the grace of God necessary to make the home happy? Where will those meet at last who walk before the Lord blameless?

Feb. 23.—SECT. VI., QUEST. XXII.

(*Continued.*)

Parents and Children.

A good mother.—You have read in your Bibles about the Prophet Samuel. He had governed the Israelites many years, when the people desired to have a King appointed over them. Samuel was directed to present Saul to them, as the King whom God had chosen. Samuel was afterwards commanded by the Lord to anoint David as Saul's successor. Can you tell the name of Samuel's mother? Hannah was a kind mother. When Samuel was a boy he was employed to assist in the tabernacle-service at Shiloh. But Hannah did not forget her absent lad; year by year she was glad to go and see him, and to take him a present. What was the gift? No doubt Samuel would have all things needful provided for him at Shiloh; but he would prize the coat made by his mother above all the rest of his clothes. Then we learn that Hannah desired her child to be a servant of God. She said, "I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." (1 Sam. i. 28.) We also learn that Hannah enjoyed true religion herself. We read of her praying to God, both when in sorrow and in gladness. She said, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord..I rejoice in Thy salvation." (1 Sam. ii. 1.)

A good son.—Who was the first King of Israel? Saul appears to have been a very hopeful young man; but, as he became older, he allowed self-will and envy so to increase within his heart, that all good feelings were destroyed. What was the name of Saul's eldest son? Jonathan had a very difficult path to walk in when his father became so wicked. Jonathan wished to please his father, but he was resolved only to do that which was right in the sight of God. Jonathan would not help Saul to kill David. (1 Sam. xx. 11—23.) Would it have been right in Jonathan to have given such aid? But Jonathan still tried to please his father in all things lawful, even after Saul had, in his passion, tried to kill him. (1 Sam. xx. 33.)

EXERCISES.—Ought parents to desire the comfort of their children? What ought they to desire for their children even more than comfort? Ought children to do what is sinful if their parents command them? Ought they to please their parents in everything that is lawful?

March 1.—SECT. VI., QUEST. XXII.

(*Continued.*)

Masters and Servants.

A faithful servant.—King Ahab was very wicked. His wife was as sinful as himself, and far more daring. What was her name? She had been accustomed from childhood to worship false gods, and her husband followed her evil example. They murdered the prophets of the Lord because they reproved sin; and caused Naboth to be murdered in order that they might seize upon his vineyard. Who was

the governor of Ahab's household? (1 Kings xviii. 3.) Was Obadiah a good man? As "Obadiah feared the Lord greatly," it might seem surprising that Ahab and Jezebel should appoint him to have the control of their property. How do you suppose this happened? Would it not be because they had more confidence in his honesty, industry, and care than those of others? They who disobey God are not likely to attend conscientiously to the claims of their fellow-men. Would it have been right for Obadiah to have been unfaithful to his trust because his master was a bad man?

A kind master.—Did you ever see men reaping corn? Can you recollect any account given in the Bible of a harvest-field, and of the farmer going to see the men at work? The farmer lived at Bethlehem, where David was afterwards born. Indeed, he was one of David's ancestors. The farmer went from the village, where his house was, to the cornfields, in which the labourers were working. We read how he spoke to them, and how they replied to him, before they began to speak about the wheat and barley. By the manner in which they saluted each other we must conclude that Boaz was a kind master. "And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee." (Ruth ii. 4.) This was a friendly salutation, and a good beginning.

Exercises.—Ought servants to be honest and industrious when their employers are not looking at them? Who requires masters to deal fairly with those employed by them? Will God judge all men impartially?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Two Sweep-Lads.

Some good people, who lived in a large place, were very desirous to do what they could to lessen the ignorance, vice, and misery which prevailed in some parts of the city. They wished to be kind to all men as far as was in their power; so they subscribed some money, with which they might have bought nice things for themselves, or their own children, and with it they hired a large room, suitable for a school, and bought seats, and books, and coals to make a fire when the weather was cold. Then they invited the people around to send their boys and girls to the school, that they might be taught to read God's Holy Word, and learn the way to heaven. No matter how ragged the children's clothes were, they were made welcome. One day a little sweep made his appearance in the school. The poor fellow seemed half-frightened when he saw the teachers so much better clothed than himself; but one of them spoke to him very kindly. The gentleman supposed, by the lad's appearance, that he would know nothing of reading. He inquired, however, if the lad had ever been to school. "Never," was the reply. "Neither on Sunday nor week-day?" "Never." "Did your parents ever teach you your alphabet?" "No, Sir." "Well, do not be discouraged; we will do our best to help you. You must first learn your letters." "I know my letters." "Do you; you will soon learn to spell easy words." "I can do that," said the little sweep. "Can you read?" "Yes, Sir." "How did you learn?" "Please, Sir, another sweep-lad, who had been to school, used to teach me the letters on the sign-boards in the street, and then the names and words, as we went along early in the morning. Then there are the placards on the boards. He was very good to me, Sir." The little sweep was placed in a class to read the Bible; and, by his good conduct, pleased his teachers much. But the older sweep's kindness ought not to be forgotten. (No. II. *February* 9.)

An Aged Couple.

In a corner, by the fireside of a cottage in Shropshire, sat an old man. He was very infirm and helpless. There was no one to pay much attention to him except his aged wife, and he needed much and continual attention. Several years before, he had received such injury in his leg as to render amputation necessary. When the leg had been taken off, the medical men discovered that they had not removed all the diseased part, and that they must perform another operation equally painful. The sufferer survived, however; and during some years longer was able to attend to many of the tasks which he used to perform. But, of course, the system had received a very severe shock; and, as age increased, this became more apparent. His mind, also, became enfeebled. At the time referred to he was unable to move about, and could not support himself in his chair; his wife had to place him in it, and fasten him there, so that he could not fall. Yet, though so helpless, he was very dear to her; and, though he could scarcely recognise any one else, he could make her understand how grateful he was to her. During about fifty years they had

loved each other, and helped each other; and their affection was unabated. Though half a century had elapsed since they pledged themselves to each other before God, they were not less dear to one another. Best of all, they had a good hope of meeting in heaven, where all pain would be excluded, and all tears wiped away for ever. (No. II. *February* 16.)

Henry II. and his Sons.

Henry II. was a very powerful monarch. He possessed a very wide territory. He was King of England. His authority was acknowledged throughout a considerable portion of what now constitutes the kingdom of France. One of his generals went over to Ireland with an army, and, after several battles, the Irish submitted to him, so that Henry became King of Ireland. He was thus raised to a position much higher than his ancestors could have thought of attaining. Yet Henry was not a happy man. He had many troubles, and some of the severest arose from his family. He had four sons, who might have been a great comfort to him, but were an occasion of much sorrow. Perhaps he was not, as a father, all that he should have been; but his sons proved exceedingly undutiful. They repeatedly rebelled against his authority, and raised soldiers to fight against his army. They knew how wrong their conduct was. We read that Henry, the eldest son, when dying, wished his father to go and see him, and forgive him; and that Richard, who survived his father, directed that his body should be buried at his father's feet, in token of his own repentance; but, whatever their temporary regrets, Henry's sons were constantly rebelling against him. We learn that, at length, Henry discovered that John, his youngest and favourite son, had been plotting against him, which so distressed him, that he was thrown into a fever, and never recovered. (No. II. *February* 23.)

Lord Raglan's Lunch.

When the British forces landed in the Crimea they were commanded by Lord Raglan. The Russians were defeated at the battle of Alma, and on other occasions; but the siege of Sebastopol proved long and difficult. Thousands of the allies perished before that stronghold was taken. One day, when a fierce assault was about to be made, a man, not wearing the uniform of a soldier, was observed in front of the British lines, and exposed to the enemy's fire. He was motioned to retire, but did not comply. An aide-de-camp, therefore, rode up to him, and angrily told him to return, rebuking him for the folly of thus exposing himself when no end could be answered thereby, and for the effrontery of transgressing published orders. "Go to the rear at once," was the peremptory command. "I really cannot do so," was the reply; "I am Lord Raglan's valet. My master is aged and in feeble health. It is time he had refreshment. I am taking his lunch, and you really must allow me to proceed." Leave was given; and, amid the flying shot, the man pursued his way. He was a faithful servant, and must have had a good master. (No. II. *March* 1.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

February 2.—About Secrets.

Rom. ii. 16: "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

1. *About secrets.*—What are they? Whatever we wish to keep from the knowledge of others. We may hide our ways, and especially our *thoughts*, from each other. It is easy for a child to do so from parents or teachers, but it is not often good to do this. It leads to slyness, and it is a sign of wrong-doing to be fond of hiding what we do from the knowledge of those about us. Yet many do this, and thus *seem* to be better than they really are. Jesus said, "Men love darkness rather than light, *because their deeds are evil.*"

2. *All secrets shall be known.*—When will this be? At the Day of Judgment. Though secrets may be kept from man, God knows them all. Does God know all things? Yes, "Every thought in man's heart; every word, and every action." A day is coming when evil and good alike shall be judged. What is it to judge? To consider a thing, and to say what it deserves. This shall be done of *all* things,—of all *good* done in secret; of all *evil* so done.

3. *The Judge.*—God is the "Judge of all the earth;" and the Lord Jesus

will, at the last great day, bring all before Him. Then every secret and forgotten thing shall be made known, and all shall receive the "due reward of their deeds." His *wisdom* is so great, that no *mistake* will be made; His power is so great, that none can *escape;* He is so *just*, that none will be *overlooked.* Men do not think of this as they hide their secrets from each other. It is a blessed thing for those who come to Jesus as their *Saviour*, to know that He will one day be their *Judge.* It is an awful truth for those who will not come to Him to be saved.

Revision.—What are secrets? Why is it not good to have secrets? Who knows all secrets? When will they be made known? For what purpose? What is it to judge? What have you learned about the Judge of all the earth?

Feb. 9.—God's Favour to Man.

Psalm viii. 4: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"

1. *The greatness of God's power.*—Have you ever *thought* about the many wonderful things all around you? You see the hills and rivers; the fields and trees; the great sea; the flowers of spring; the snow and frost of winter; the clouds, the blue sky, and the glory of the bright sun by day; the moon and the stars shining out so prettily in the darkness of the night. You know who made all these. Do you ever *think* of the great wisdom and power by which all is kept in order? and by which the life of the millions of living things in the earth, and sea, and sky are preserved and fed day by day? Then do you ever think of *yourself*, of how and why you are made? David considered all this, and thought of—

2. *God's favour to man.*—He knew how limited the wisdom and power of man are, and said, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" He wondered that God, who was so great in power and glory, should so care for him. God was mindful of man in creating him with so wonderful a body and soul. He gave him "dominion over the earth and all in it." He is ever mindful in caring for him day by day; and especially in providing a Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ, and a heaven of rest and happiness when life is over.

3. *Why God thus cares for man.*—It is for His own glory, and for our happiness. Does He require anything from us? Has He told us what we should do to please Him? How ought we to think of God for His great goodness? Do you think of this day by day? Ask Him to pardon your sins, and help you to live to His glory, that you may be happy now, and for ever.

Revision.—What has God done to show forth His power? How did David find this out? What question did he ask about man? What favour has God shown to man? Why has He done this? What return can we make for His goodness?

Feb. 16.—The Way of Peace.

Rom. iii. 17. "And the way of peace have they not known."

1. *The way of peace.*—What is peace? It is to be at *rest.* The sea is at peace when its waters are calm and still. In the storm upon the lake Jesus said to the winds and the waves, "Peace, be still, and there was a great calm." The *body* cannot be at peace when suffering from cold, or hunger, or pain. Trouble may keep the *soul* from peace; sin surely does this. What, then, is the way of peace? That way only which is *free from sin.* But will not *riches*, or *power*, or *honour* give peace? No, not if there be only these. Can you name any who had these, of whom the Bible says they were without peace? Of what does Solomon say that "her paths are peace?"

2. *Many miss "the way of peace."*—Who are they? *All who sin.* For, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." Of such it is said, "The way of peace have they not known." But have not *all* sinned? Yes. How, then, may we find the way of peace? By seeking the pardon of our sins. Then the peace of God shall be given us; and He will "guide our feet into the way of peace."

Revision.—What is meant by "peace?" What will keep the body from being at peace? What keeps the soul from being at peace? Who are those who do not know "the way of peace?" How may we find it? Who alone can give peace?

Feb. 23.—A Lesson from the Corn-field.

MARK iv. 3: "Behold, there went out a sower to sow."

1. *The sowing.*—As the sower went forth he cast the seed on all sides. It fell in different places; some by the wayside, where the ground was trodden hard; some on stony ground, where the earth was thin; some where thorns grew thick; and some on good ground. While busy at his labour, the sower could not tell what would become of each handful of seed he threw.

2. *What came of it.*—The birds quickly picked up what fell on the path, and it was seen no more. That on the stony ground sprang up quickly, but it as quickly withered away again under the heat of the sun, for there was not earth enough to give moisture or strength to the plant. And when the thorns grew up, they choked the seed which was sown among them. But the seed which fell on good ground grew up, and brought forth a rich harvest; "some thirty, some sixty, and some" even a "hundredfold!"

3. *What the sower teaches.*—The Word of God is cast upon the minds of men, as seeds upon the earth. Who are they who sow it? How is it sown? But men do not all receive it alike. The hearts of some are hard as ground by the wayside; and, by evil thoughts and bad company, Satan quickly takes the good seed away. Some who hear the Word, try for a time to do what it teaches; but they do not think, or pray, about it, or really love it; so, when trouble comes through doing right, or when cares or riches come, the Word is lost, or choked, as the seed on the stony ground, or among the thorns, and no good comes of it. But there are those who receive it as on good ground. These gladly take it into their hearts, and seek God's blessing on it, and it grows up into *good words*, and *kind deeds*, and brings forth the "*fruit of good living.*" How do you receive the good seed? Is yours a hard or a thorny heart? or is it like the good ground?

REVISION.—In how many different kinds of places did the seed fall? What became of that on the wayside? &c. What is it that is like the seed? why so? Why are not all good who hear the Word of God? What will the Word bring forth, if we receive it, as on good ground?

March 1.—Deliverance from Danger.

MARK iv. 41: "Even the wind and the sea obey Him."

1. *The great storm.*—Jesus was weary with the toil of the day, and "when the even was come" He set forth with His disciples to "go to the other side" of the Sea of Galilee. As they went, He lay in the "hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow." But did the Lord Jesus feel tired? Yes; for He was the *Son of man*, and for our sakes "took upon Himself our nature." Soon a great storm arose. The fierce winds came down suddenly upon the sea from between the mountains. In the darkness of the night the ship was tossed to and fro upon the waves, which heaved and rolled in the tempest, and which "beat into the ship, so that it was now full." Here was a time of danger! Yet the disciples had met it while obeying Jesus. Danger *may* beset the right way; but worse danger is *always* in the wrong.

2. *The disciples' prayer.*—They tried all they could to save themselves, but in vain. They were full of fear; and in their distress they cried to Jesus, "Lord, save us: we perish!" How earnest this prayer was! saying exactly what they wanted. Why were they so earnest? Because *they felt their danger*. This may teach us how to pray. All pray thus who feel their need.

3. *The answer of Jesus.*—He arose at once, and, standing calmly on the deck of the little vessel, He "rebuked the winds and the sea," and said, "Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." How wonderful this was! The disciples had seen Jesus work many miracles on the bodies and the minds of men; but now they saw His power over wind and sea, "and they feared exceedingly!" Jesus had this power, because He was the SON OF GOD. How soon the danger was past when He helped! None need fear who have Jesus with them. Will you not keep near to Jesus, and go to Him "in every time of need?"

REVISION.—Where did the storm take place? when? Who were in the ship? How did the disciples pray? How did Jesus answer them? How should we pray? How may we be saved in time of danger?

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

49. When Peter refused to eat the food presented to him, (Acts x. 12,) he was obeying the law contained in Lev. xx. 25.

50. Jonathan foresaw with pleasure that David would be raised to the throne instead of himself. (1 Sam. xxiii. 17.)

51. In 2 Tim. iv. 11, Paul speaks very favourably of John Mark.

52. Ishmael was fourteen years older than Isaac. Compare Gen. xvi. 16, and Gen. xxi. 5.

53. Esau married his cousin Mahalath. (Gen. xxviii. 9.)

54. Epaphroditus was dangerously ill through his ministerial labours. (Phil. ii. 25—30.)

W.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.—No. XIII.

The question proposed was, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*"—Acts ix. 4.

1 v.	13 | 12 | 10 | 16 | 1 | 3 | 5.	Ephesus.	Acts xix. 32, 34.
2 v.	20 | 4 | 11 | 27 | 2 | 15.	Elymas.	Acts xiii. 8.
3 v.	8 | 11 | 21 | 19 | 14 | 6.	Lystra.	Acts xiv. 11—13.
4 v.	28 | 7 | 22 | 11 | 17 | 24 | 18 | 15.	Eutychus.	Acts xx. 9.
5 v.	12 | 2 | 12 | 24 | 25 | 21.	Paphos.	Acts xiii. 5—7.
6 v.	23 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 26 | 5.	Tarsus.	Acts ix. 29, 30.
7 v.	9 | 6 | 14.	War.	Micah iv. 3.

W.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

WILLIAM SLINGER.

"That goodness is power" may be exemplified in youth, as well as in maturer age. The subject of this memoir furnishes an instance of its exhibition in no common degree. He was naturally modest and retiring in his manner, yet was known by many persons, and was admired by them for his intelligence and Christian virtue. This brief sketch is intended to show how his character was formed, and the beneficial influence which it exerted upon others.

William Slinger was born at Usworth, in the Gateshead Circuit, on February 15th, 1850. His parents were religious, but he received from his mother little more than the legacy of her prayers, as she died when he was two years and a half old. Happily for him, his aunt, Miss Mary Ann Lowrie, watched over him with almost a mother's care and love; and, in return, he yielded her the loving obedience and trust which she so well merited. The religious atmosphere of his home was of that happy and earnest kind which seemed to teach and induce him to "seek first the kingdom of God." The power of this silent training was duly felt by his tender heart. In early years he was deeply impressed with the importance of religion. At the age of twelve he seemed more fully to feel the claims of God upon him, and decided to give his whole heart to the service of the Lord. He prayed earnestly for a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, and obtained it. Under such circumstances, many youths find relief and instruction by opening their minds to some stranger; but, having been trained to speak freely on this subject to his father, William first gladdened him by telling him of his joy as a forgiven sinner.

Following the true instincts of a converted soul, he sought some means of

doing good to others; and was employed as a junior teacher in the Sabbath-school at Coundon, in the Bishop - Auckland Circuit, where his father had for some time resided. In this new capacity he laboured with so much earnestness and skill, that he soon endeared himself to all the teachers.

He attended the Bishop - Auckland Wesleyan day-school during the latter part of his school-life, and there displayed great love for learning, and made considerable progress in mathematics, elements of Latin, and general knowledge. To have done an exercise "as well as Slinger would have done it," was a compliment any boy would be pleased with. His consistent conduct, as well as his ability, recommended him to all. He was a favourite among his schoolfellows, even those whom he rivalled; and by the master was loved more as a son than as a pupil. The power of his simple goodness was remarkably displayed in the fact, that by many parents who had never seen him he was known and appreciated through the reports of their children; and that his good influence has survived his own earthly career, is amply evidenced by the terms of admiration in which his old schoolfellows still speak of him. His punctuality was remarkable. Though he had to walk more than two miles to the school daily, he was scarcely ever known to be absent or late. He never seemed to be in a hurry, yet his work was always done.

In January, 1865, he left his father's house, to enter on his apprenticeship, and in this new relationship soon won the confidence of all. Before the first year was half spent, he was stricken with a fatal fever, under which he lingered only eleven days. In the commencement of his illness he engaged much in prayer, and seemed to seek a renewed and fuller assurance of his acceptance with God. This having been obtained, he was able to triumph over his sufferings, though they were very severe. He often sang "There is a land of pure delight," &c., and "O happy day that fixed my choice," &c. Seeing his aunt weeping, he said, "No tears, aunt; there are no tears in heaven." On hearing the doctor's opinion of his case, he exclaimed, "I am going to heaven, but I shall love you still." Thus he passed away, leaving a full assurance that his resurrection will be unto eternal life.

A short life spent in the service of God is better far than a long one in the service of sin; and it may be found in the great day that William Slinger was the instrument of more good than many who have had the full measure of threescore years and ten allowed them. H. M.

THE SCRIPTURE-TREASURY.

PARAPHRASES OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

II. BY THE LATE DR. MARSH.

Composed during a Wakeful Night in his last Illness, when nearly eighty-nine years old, and written the next Morning, at his Dictation.

"*Our Father*,"—
By right of creation,
By gracious adoption.

"*Which art in heaven*,"—
The home of Thy angels,
The seat of Thy glory.

"*Hallowed be Thy name*,"—
By the thoughts of our hearts;
By the words of our lips;
By the actions of our lives.

"*Thy kingdom come*,"—
Of Providence, to protect us;
Of grace, to refine us,
Of glory, to crown us.

"*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*,"—
Submissively, cheerfully,
And finally, perfectly.

"*Give us this day our daily bread*,"—
Of temporal things for our bodies,
Of spiritual things for our souls.

"*And forgive us our trespasses,*"—
Against the precepts of Thy law,
And the grace of Thy Gospel.

"*As we forgive them that trespass against us,*"—
In imitation of Thy love,
And to the glory of true religion.

"*And lead us not into temptation,*"—
Of such honours, riches, or pleasures
As might war against the soul.

"*But deliver us from evil,*"—
Of Satan, to deceive us;
Of sin, to defile us.

"*For Thine is the kingdom,*"—
Of Providence and grace.

"*The power,*"—
To establish it.

"*And the glory,*"—
Of all good.

"*For ever and ever; Amen,*"—
So let it be;
So it is;
So it shall be.

By this prayer of our Lord,—
The Father bless,
The Son adore,
The Spirit praise,
For evermore.
Amen, and Amen.

DAY-SCHOOL AFFAIRS AND WORK.

VALEDICTORY SERVICE AT THE WESTMINSTER TRAINING COLLEGE.

The Annual Valedictory Service was held on Saturday, December 14th, 1867, in the New Lecture Hall, the first occasion of its occupancy for this purpose. The increased accommodation afforded was very serviceable, and fully made use of by the visiters. After devotional exercises, and the Secretary had read the Class-lists and Appointments, the President of the Conference (Rev. J. Bedford) delivered

THE ADDRESS TO STUDENTS

about to depart to schools. Having referred to various current ideas upon the subject, he said:—

"THE WORK OF EDUCATION

is to deal not only with the intellectual faculties, but with the moral nature of human beings; so that, while knowledge is communicated and the intellect developed, and while habits of self-government are inculcated, the teacher may feel, and cause his pupils to understand, that the evils of the heart must be conquered, and that this can only be effectually done by the aid of a Divine power, which must be sought, and may be obtained, by prayer."

THE QUALIFICATIONS

required for this work were next spoken of by the President, thus:—

"You can only teach others what you know yourselves; and the more thoroughly you know it, the more likely will you be to teach it with success. To communicate the knowledge of facts and opinions, you must have such facts and opinions well stored and classified in your own minds, and ready for use at any suitable moment;—to develop the faculties you must have a well-cultivated mind in a healthy body, capable of understanding and fostering such development;—to restrain the passions, you must be thoroughly habituated to habits of self-restraint, so that your example may always aid your authority;—and to deal with and win the heart, your own heart must be fully under the influence of Divine truth and grace, and you must live and work in prayerful dependence upon the ever-present and all-sufficient grace of God. . . . I need not tell you that the highest attainments may be spoiled by outbursts of passion, by waywardness of temper, by excess of severity, or excess of kindness, or by trying each of such excesses in turn. A well-balanced mind, a sound judgment, a firm but not an austere will, a calm, steady purpose, an authority which never stretches power, and never wavers in maintaining right, combined with a kindly disposition always ready to look at passing circumstances, and allow for youthful incompetence, or frivolity, or instability; these are the qualities you must seek and cultivate, and on these much of your success will depend. All these will be assisted, and some of them can only be

steadily manifested, in proportion as you cultivate true personal piety. If your heart be kept right with God, it will influence and assist all your mental faculties, and give character, consistency, and force to the exercise of all your moral powers. But if that be neglected, such neglect will derange or weaken the springs of action within you, and render less sure the temper and habit of your daily life. I urge you, then, most earnestly to keep your heart with all diligence, to live in daily communion with God, to plead with Him for grace to hallow your spirit and regulate your conduct, and for His abiding presence with you amidst the manifold duties and frequent trials of your daily life. All this you will constantly need; for, as I have said, you will have to deal with a moral nature which, in the case of every one of your scholars, has been tainted by sin, and will show that taint under varying circumstances, sometimes so as to try your temper and patience to the uttermost. No one can mingle with children without observing how early, and in what varied forms, vice shows itself, and how much watchfulness and care should characterize those who have to restrain, to govern, to correct, sometimes even to punish, them, to prevent it from spreading, like an infection, all around. And no one can have studied the nature of children without observing how much may be done by kindness, combined with firmness, in moulding and regulating their tempers and habits, and winning them to a virtuous course of life."

He next reminded the students of their position as

DENOMINATIONAL TEACHERS,

saying that, as Wesleyan Methodists,

"In education, one of our principles is that, in the circumstances of this country —whatever may be expedient elsewhere —it is our duty, as a religious denomination, to educate our own children in our own belief and practice; and to educate such other children as may be voluntarily placed under our care, yet not so as to make their education dependent on their conformity to our creed and principles. The Wesleyan Methodists have a conscience-clause in their school trust-deeds; and, while they never hesitate to avow their creed and to defend it, they declare that they will not use their schools for purposes of mere proselytism."

Being convinced that "by a Denominational system more successfully than by any other, they can serve the great interests of civil and religious life, of domestic purity, national virtue and national stability, on as wide a scale as possible, they do not intend to surrender their claim to be heard in its favour, and to receive, in continuance, such aid as they are receiving now, either under the existing system of inspection and administration, or any other and better system which can be devised, founded upon a full recognition of the rights of individual conscience, the rights of religious classes, the public engagements into which the country has entered with the promoters, trustees, and friends of Denominational schools, and the duty of the State to provide for the elementary instruction of any of the children of the poor for whom it can be shown that no suitable provision is made, or is likely to be made, by existing agencies, or by agencies of a like class."

He questioned whether it could "be supposed by any careful observer of the state of civil and religious society in this country, that any Government would think of proposing a scheme of education which would paralyse the energies of religious men, stop the current of liberality in supporting existing schools, sweep away from those schools all distinctive belief and distinctive instruction, and leave the rising generation, without religious teaching, to drift into a chaos of scepticism or immorality. Whatever may be expedient or possible in some other parts of the empire, the Denominational system has struck its roots too deeply in England to be uprooted or set aside now. And there is really, I venture to think, no insuperable difficulty in interlinking it with a system such as that of the British and Foreign School Society, and enabling the two to work, side by side, and to extend their operations, aided, in proportion to their numbers and efficiency, and in proportion, again, to the proved needs of the population, either by Government-grants, or local Education-Aid Societies, or even by permissive local rates, if, in some few places, such rates should be deemed necessary, and if it can be made to appear that the levying of any such rates can be so arranged as not to stop the current of individual Christian liberality; but always providing a conscience-clause which, while it will enable parents who may see fit to withdraw their children from distinctive religious teaching and from attendance at particular places of worship, would also protect religious parents in seeking for their children a religious training. Yes, conscience must be respected on one side as well as the other. I assume, then, that the Denominational system, though it may, in the progress of events, be somewhat modified, will continue in England; and that I

may address you as teachers who are attached to it, and will do your best without bigotry, and without prejudice, to promote it."

Passing to details of work and duty, he urged them to win the confidence of SCHOLARS by winning their hearts; and to show them that they cared both for their souls and bodies. He made special reference to the *senior scholars in advanced classes*, to whom some of them would be called to impart more than the rudiments of education; saying:—

"These young people who discover an aptitude for improvement, and remain with you to gain it, neither as mere children nor as mature men and women, will require talent, tact, discrimination, delicacy of sentiment and feeling, and a prudent, constant use of all your knowledge and influence, so that their moral sentiments may become pure and well-established, while their intellectual powers are largely developed. And, if you succeed, you will confer special benefits, not only on them, but on the country. Such young people will constitute a breakwater against the surges of ignorance and immorality; they will make themselves acquainted with the nature and reason of things; they will read a healthy literature; they will study the general laws which relate to capital and labour; they will scorn meanness and bribery; they will cultivate a healthy independence of thought and action; and they will build up the great bulwarks of civil and religious freedom in our land, and do their full part to maintain its credit, its honour, its pre-eminence throughout the world."

The President also pointed out to the teachers how, in several respects, it was desirable they should comport themselves in their relations to, and their intercourse with, *Parents*, *Employers of half-time scholars*, *Government Inspectors*, and *Managing Committees*. Having briefly sketched some of the benefits which must result from their work, if it should prove to be successfully done, he concluded by saying:—

"Go forth, then, my young friends, to your varied work, trusting in the Lord, resolving to employ all your resources in doing it, and hoping and praying for great success. The sympathy of your friends, of your Ministers, and of the Church to which you belong, is with you. The opinions and feelings of the most thoughtful and Christian portions of the nation, to a remarkable extent, are with you. The voices of the future beckon you onward, and bid you hope. The better days of light and knowledge and love are coming; the days when the plower shall overtake the reaper, and both shall rejoice together. I pray that you may have a long, useful, and honourable course, and a present and abiding recompense. May God bless you!"

The PRINCIPAL, Rev. J. Scott, moved that the thanks of the assembly be given to the President for his admirable address.

The EX-PRESIDENT (Rev. W. Arthur, M.A.) seconded the proposal; saying, in the course of his remarks, that "He believed that for the future well-being of religion in this country there was scarcely anything more desirable than the extension of Methodist day-schools. It was difficult to define it; but, if he could, he would say Protestant schools, not confining himself to the Methodists. But at this hour in England there were many schools nominally Protestant, but so conducted as to teach the smallest amount of Protestantism possible, and as much of what was favourable to Popery as they dared amongst a Protestant population. They must remember that that was the state of things at the present day, and be faithful to their Bible and to their conscience; and he trusted that, by God's blessing upon them, in spite of all their difficulties, the prediction of the President would be verified—that they would find that the Divine Power was over the land to guide and protect them, and that their young friends, when many of those who were older were gone, would see the country better educated, more Protestant, more Evangelical, more religious, more devoted, with less cares and less misery, more of the fear of the Lord, better and more flourishing Churches, better and more numerous schools, a happier week, a holier Sunday, and families altogether more trained in the fear of the Lord."

DR. OSBORN was next called upon. He said that "he entirely sympathised with the wish that events might prove the President to be a true prophet. . . The President had said, with great propriety, that they had always had a conscience clause, and he was glad to hope that the nation would have one before long. He thought the events of the last fortnight encouraged that hope. They were all on their way, unless he misread the signs of the times, to a conscience-clause such as they ought to have had thirty years ago; and he had no scruple at all in saying such as he distinctly understood in 1839 they were to have had. He happened to

know the circumstances under which matters were negotiated then, and he distinctly understood that that was the state of the disposition of parties who had since manifested such a different feeling; and in proportion to the disappointment which they had felt at the manner in which the question had been postponed and opposed in the interval, was the gratification afforded by the hope that it now approached a satisfactory solution."

Dr. Rigg, referring to the question of Denominational education, said that the experiment had not as yet had fair play; for the leading Denomination of the country had not been true in this matter to its constitutional position,—it had departed from the Protestantism of the Reformation, and from the toleration which was involved in the Revolution of 1688. He, for several reasons, trusted that recent occurrences did indicate an improvement, instancing especially the avowed return of Nonconformists to "the position held by most of them thirty years ago,—that it was the duty of the State to secure as far as possible an adequate education for every English child."

Other addresses were also given by the Revds. B. Frankland, B.A.; J. Harvard; and W. Shaw.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

The Production of Paper.

A German statistician, Dr. Rudel, has collected some curious facts relative to the production of paper. He says that the use of papyrus and tablets, covered with wax for letters, public documents, &c., ceased 550 years ago, when parchment was generally adopted. Paper did not come into general use until the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first machine for the production of paper was constructed in 1290, at Ravensburg, and paper was first manufactured in Italy in 1330, in France in 1360, in Switzerland in 1470, in England in 1588, in Holland in 1685, in Russia in 1712, in Pennsylvania in 1725. The number of paper-mills now existing in the principal states of Europe, is as follows:—Great Britain, 408; France, 276; Germany, 243; Austria, 68; Russia 40; Italy, 30; Belgium, 26; Spain, 17; Switzerland, 13; Sweden, 8; Turkey, 1. In the United States of America there are 520 paper-mills. The annual production of paper in Europe is 8,056,000 cwt., valued at £15,000,000. The improved paper-mills now in use are capable of producing 125 lb. of paper in an hour, and a paper-mill working continuously for a whole year would manufacture 52,560,000 sheets, which, if laid side by side, would extend to a length equal to that of the diameter of the earth.

The Devil's Lime-Twig.

"It is better, and safer," says old John Spencer, "to ride alone, than to have a thief's company; and such is a wicked man, who will rob thee of precious time, if he do thee no more mischief. The Nazarites, who might drink no wine, were also forbidden to cut grapes, whereof wine is made. So we must not only avoid sin itself, but also the causes and occasions of it, among which bad company, (the lime-twig of the devil,) is the chiefest, especially to catch those natures which, like the good-fellow planet, Mercury, are most swayed by others."

Pythagoras before he admitted any one into his school, inquired who were his intimates; justly concluding that they who would choose immoral companions, would not be much profited by his instructions.

James Beattie.

James Beattie, sen., Gordonstown, better known as the Auchterless John Pounds, was born January 27th, 1781, in the parish of Rayne, Scotland. About the end of the last, or the beginning of the present, century, Mr. Beattie removed from the parish of Rayne to Gordonstown, in Auchterless, and there commenced business on his own account as a shoemaker. At that period schools were few, and far between, and many, especially in rural districts, thought it only a useless expenditure of money and time to send their children to school, until they reached the age of twelve or thirteen years. Owing to this state of matters, Mr. Beattie was not long in observing the lamentable state of ignorance, which then prevailed around him. Many had grown up to man and woman's estate, unable either to read or write, and who with respect to religious instruction were equally ignorant. This first suggested to him the idea of himself becoming a volunteer instructor. On his intention becoming known, many of his neighbours placed their children under his tuition, and such was his art in

gaining the affections of the young folks, that his workshop was soon filled with the rising generation of both sexes, and he had often to work till past midnight, to make up for time spent in teaching during the day. For the long period of sixty years, Mr. Beattie conducted a school, at which there were daily in attendance from thirty to forty scholars, and nothing would have offended him so much as to have offered him anything in the shape of school-fees.

"Take Hold, and Lift!"

A TEACHER of the Freedmen, in one of the Southern States, was sitting at the window of her room, watching two negroes loading goods into a cart. One of them was disposed to shirk; the other stopped, and, looking sharply at the lazy one, said, "Sam, do you expect to go to heaven?" "Yes." "Then take hold, and lift." There are a great many Christians in our Churches and Sabbath-schools expecting to go to heaven, who would do well to strengthen their hope of going there by taking hold and lifting some of the burdens which they let their brethren bear alone.

"Who cares for Mother?"

"POOH! who cares for mother?" said a lad one day to his sister, who had told him that their mother wished them to quit their sports on the sand, and go home at a certain hour.

"My boy," said an old gentleman, who overheard the sneering remark as he sat on a rock near by, "don't speak thus of your mother. I despised my mother when I was young, and ran into all manner of evil, until I was almost undone; but, after her death, I thought of her counsels, went to Christ, and was saved. *O, how much I owe to my mother and her prayers!* On the other hand, I have heard many bad men confess that their ruin began when they began to despise their mothers."

The boy's eye kindled with emotion, and his voice trembled as he said, "I will never speak lightly of my mother again;" and then gathering up his playthings, he called his sister, and went home a wiser and a better boy.

"Take another!"

AT the battle of Meeanee, an officer who had been doing good service, came up to the Commanding General, Sir Charles Napier, and said, "Sir Charles, we have taken a standard." The General looked at him, but made no reply; and, turning round, began to speak to some one else; upon which the officer repeated, "Sir Charles, we have taken a standard." The General turned sharp round upon him, and said, "*then take another.*" The spirit which this great commander would impress on his subordinate should be possessed by every soldier of Christ. The conflict must be persistently kept up so long as there is any unsubdued sin in ourselves, or any soul living in enmity to God.—*The Freeman.*

Speak to Children.

SAID a little boy to me, "I don't believe my teacher cares anything about me. She just comes into the class, and *asks the questions in the book*, and that is all. She never *talks good to me*. She never *speaks* to me at any other time. I don't think she likes the Sunday-school much."

Little Charley came running to his teacher one day, and leaning upon her lap, looked earnestly and lovingly into her face. He said, "Miss S——, you love me, don't you?" "Yes," she replied, "I love you dearly. But why do you think so? I never told you I loved you." "No, but I knew you did, 'cause *you always speak to me* when you see me, and *you look at me and smile*. Everybody don't do so. I *knew* you loved me, and *I love you, too.*" As she hugged the little fellow to her heart, and kissed his sweet, confiding face, she thought, "If a word or a smile can have such an influence, how must I watch my speech, my actions, my looks."

Too Sweet.

IN the Free Milton Church, Glasgow, in the days when Dr. John Duncan was Minister, there sat one of the "men" from Rosshire, a picturesque man arrayed in a blue camlet cloak, with a bright red handkerchief tied up to his cheeks. He was in the habit of walking into the vestry after the sermon, and giving the Minister an advice. A young friend of ours was preaching on one occasion in this church; and, after sermon, this extraordinary figure, whom he had noticed under the pulpit, stalked into the vestry, and said, "My young frien', ye hae gi'n us a sweet discourse the day; but there's ae thing I would say,—a discourse may be ow'er [too] sweet. I would say to you, as Boaz said, (Ruth ii. 14,) 'Dip thy morsel in the vinegar.'"—*Dr. Begg.*

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

FEBRUARY 2.—Morning Lesson.

MESSAGES AND SIGNS.—Exodus iii. 15—22; iv. 1—9.

Summary.—God tells Moses what to say to the elders of Israel, and what to the King of Egypt. He forewarns him of the obstinacy of the King, and apprizes him of His own wonders in the land. He foretells the "favour" which should be shown to Israel by the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus; and gives Moses three signs to attest his Divine mission.

I. Messages.—Ch. iii. 15—18. (1.) *To the Israelites.*—V. 15—17. *Said moreover,*—to give more impressiveness to v. 14. *Unto the children,*—through the elders, ver. 16; ch. iv. 29. *This is My name,—I* Am, v. 14. *My memorial,—the Lord God of your fathers,* by which "I will be for ever remembered, celebrated, praised, and invoked," *unto all generations,* not only of Israel, but of all mankind. *Elders,*—the heads of the tribes. *Appeared unto me.*—See v. 2—6. *Surely visited.*—A fulfilment of Joseph's prophecy, (Gen. l. 24,) which declares the purpose of the visit. See, also, v. 8. *That which is done,*—by the "taskmasters," v. 7, 9. *And I have said,*—"determined, or resolved." See v. 8, and notes in Afternoon Lesson for January 26th.

(2.) *To the King of Egypt.*—V. 18. *They,*—"the elders," *shall hearken.*—I will incline them to do so; a very necessary assurance, considering the difficulty of the enterprise. *Hath met with us.*—"We have received a special command from the great God whom we and our forefathers worship." *We beseech thee.*—A very earnest form of entreaty. *Three days' journey.*—The time it would take to reach Mount Sinai, where, in the first instance, they wished to go. *That we may sacrifice,*—really, to "hold a feast" of rejoicing for their happy deliverance, ch. v. 1.

II. Predictions.—V. 19—22. *No, not by,* &c.,—(Margin, "but by a strong hand,") i.e., unless he be made to feel how terrible is My power. *And,*—therefore, to teach him this, *I will stretch,* &c. *My wonders,*—the plagues He sent; so called because they would fill the people with amazement. *After that,*—when made afraid for his own life, as well as for the lives of his people, ch. xii. 30—33. *I will give.. favour,*—through dread of My terrors, and a desire to be rid of them. *Shall borrow,*—properly, "ask," or, "request." *Of her that sojourneth,*—whence it is evident that the Israelites lived along with the Egyptians. *Jewels,*—or vessels. *Spoil,*—take with their own consent what you have well-earned by your hard, unpaid toil and service.

III. Signs.—Ch. iv. 1—9. *They will not believe,*—that Thou hast sent me, unless I can give some proof of it. *A rod,*—his shepherd's staff, probably. *Cast it,* &c.—As he was to do before Pharaoh, ch. vii. 9. *A serpent,*—venomous, most likely, for *Moses fled,* &c. *And caught it,*—believing God would keep him from harm. *That they may,* &c.,—they will not doubt when they see thee do this. *Furthermore.*—God would thus give Moses ample evidence, to make his own faith strong and unwavering. *Into thy bosom again.*—Thus, the disease, (which was very hard to be cured,) and the healing of it, came by the same act; and so, the miracle was plain and undeniable. V. 8. If one sign will not convince them, surely two will. V. 9. But I will give thee even a third, which shall be realized hereafter. *Become blood,*—as it did in the river: this was one of the plagues, ch. vii. 19, 20.

Reflections.—1. *A message from God should have very solemn weight with the children of godly parents.*—There is a touching appeal in this phrase, "the Lord God of your fathers." Surely it would thrill some of the Israelites with holy memories of the past.

2. *Tyrants are never willing to release their slaves*, ch. iii. 19.—The worst of all tyrants is Satan, and he gives evil wages, Rom. vi. 23. But our Jesus is "mighty to save," Heb. vii. 25.

3. *Our obedience to God should be as well-instructed as it is zealous.*—Moses was not unwilling to go; but he felt the difficulty of the task, and sought to be fully qualified, hence, ch. iv. 1.

4. *Men have a right to ask for special proof from those who profess to have a special commission from God.*—Moses gave this. So did Christ and His Apostles, Heb. ii. 4.

QUESTIONS.—What was the "memorial" of God among the Israelites? Who were the "elders?" Who foretold that God would visit the Israelites in Egypt? What was Moses to say to Pharaoh? Where was he to say he wished to take the people? What to do? What did God say about Pharaoh? What were the Israelites to ask of the Egyptians? Why did Moses answer God? What happened to his rod? what to his hand? What else was he to do if necessary? Why was he to do these things?

Illustration.—"EVERY WOMAN SHALL BORROW," ETC.

See ch. iii. 22. "This is certainly not a very correct translation: the original word signifies simply to *ask*, *request*, *demand*, *require*, *inquire*, &c.; but it does not signify to *borrow*, in the proper sense of that word. . . . The Septuagint has, 'she shall ask;' the Vulgate, 'she shall demand.' . . The *European* versions are generally correct on this point; and our common English version is almost the sole transgressor. . . God commanded the Israelites to *ask*, or *demand*, a certain recompense for their past services, and He inclined the hearts of the Egyptians to give liberally."—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

FEBRUARY 2.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE EQUITY OF GOD.—Romans ii.

For repetition, verses 28, 29.

SUMMARY.—Having spoken of the judgment of God against the Gentiles, the Apostle turns to the Jews, and teaches that they may not hope to escape it; but that God will judge every man according to his works and privileges, without favour for the Jew, or prejudice against the Gentile. He allows the advantage of the Jew, but shows that this avails nothing, unless he keep the law.

I. WORKS, NOT PERSONS, WILL BE RESPECTED IN THE JUDGMENT.—V. 1—11. *Therefore*,—the inference from the judgment of God on the Gentiles is strong against the Jews, who have clearer light. *Inexcusable*,—without excuse in doing evil, ch. i. 20. *O man*,—a common name, marking no distinction: *Judgest*,—"condemnest:" the Jews were very prone to do this. *For wherein thou . . doest the same.*—Thou dost, in fact, more heavily condemn thyself, for thou art as guilty as the Gentile. V. 2. *According to truth*,—without partiality, and having respect to secret as well as open sins, v. 16. *Against them*, &c.,—whoever they are. V. 3. *Thinkest thou*,—is this thy conceit? *Shalt escape*,—through some loophole made for thee as a special favourite with the Judge. V. 4. *Or despisest*, &c.—Does "the rich abundance of His kindness," &c., cause thee to think lightly of His righteous power? *Not knowing*,—not discerning. *Leadeth*,—is designed by God to do so. V. 5. "In the hardness and impenitence of thy heart" thou really *treasurest up wrath*,—instead of the safety thy vain confidence expects. *Righteous judgment*,—see on v. 2. V. 6. *Render*,—repay. *According to his deeds*,—works, i.e., "as he deserves." V. 7. *Patient continuance*,—"steadfast endurance," or perseverance. *Seek for*,—earnestly strive after, being determined to obtain. V. 8. *Contentious*,—denouncing other men, and stubbornly fighting against God. *Do not obey*, &c.,—yielding to what is wrong, disobedient to what is right. *Indignation*, &c.,—a store, indeed, of wrath "treasured up" by their own wickedness, Ps. lxxviii. 49. V. 9. *The Jew first*,—in punishment, as in privilege, ch. i. 16. V. 10. A repetition, in substance, of v. 7, for the sake of emphasis, and to mark more strongly the difference between the fate of evil-doers and the glorious destiny of those who do "the work of good." V. 11. *For*,—it is the work, not the particular man, God looks at.

II. PRIVILEGES THE MEASURE OF

JUDGMENT.—V. 12—16. V. 12. Where there is more light there is more knowledge, power, responsibility; and the judgment of God will recognise this difference, because He will judge, not only by the *law* written in a book, but by the law written in the hearts of men; and not only outward acts, but *secret* thoughts, counsels, motives, will be tested, v. 16; Eccles. xii. 14; Luke viii. 17; also, Luke xii. 48. V. 13. *Not the hearers*,—who read, and profess great respect for, the law. *But the doers*,—rendering actual obedience, James i. 22—25. V. 14, 15, teach that the Gentiles, without the law of Moses, had light enough to place them under obligations to God; also a *conscience* dictating their duty according to that light; and that therefore it was possible for them to be *doers* of the law they had, and so to "stand" in the judgment of God *in the day*, &c., v. 16.

III. THE JEW "WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES."—V. 17—24. *Behold*,—this is thy boast. *Art called*,—by way of proud distinction. *Restest*,—leaning upon it alone for justification. *Of God*,—as thine, in a peculiar sense. *Approvest*,—Margin, "triest the things that differ." V. 18. *Out of the law*,—which reveals the will of God. V. 19. *Art confident*,—having assurance bordering on arrogance. *Hast the form*, &c.,—"possess in the law the perfect pattern of knowledge and of truth." V. 21. *Thou, therefore*,—"I will allow all of privilege, dignity, and power thou dost claim: thou oughtest, therefore, to be quite free from blame thyself. Now *dost thou*, &c.?—art thou free?" V. 21—23 contain a pointed challenge to the Jew. *Sacrilege*,—profaning, or robbing, the temple, Mal. iii. 8—10. *Is blasphemed*,—by your guilty conduct in these particulars. *As it is written*.—Isai. lii. 5; Ezek. xxxvi. 20—23.

IV. "AN ISRAELITE INDEED."—V. 25—29. *If thou keep*, &c.,—which thou art more bound to do than the less-favoured Gentile. *But if.. a breaker*, &c.,—dost thou not sink to a level with him? V. 26. *Therefore*, &c.—Do you not, in fact, change places? Is not he more honourable than thou? V. 27. Nay, will he not, in turn, become thy judge? Will not his obedience heavily condemn thy disobedience? Luke xi. 30, 31. V. 28, 29. See Illustration II.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *How prone men are to pride themselves on a little advantage, and to frown on others!*—What need there is to remember the Saviour's advice, Matt. vii. 1—5; and to be admonished by David's conduct, 2 Sam. xii. 1—7. It is far better to be anxious about our own innocence than another's guilt, lest our condemnation be the heavier for our censure of others.

2. *What a proof of degeneracy of nature it is when goodness hardens the heart, instead of melting it into thankfulness.*—See v. 4, 5.

3. "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*," *especially when judging yourselves.*—For, though we may deceive ourselves, God cannot be deceived. See v. 2, 11, 16.

4. *Religious professions and privileges cannot save us in the judgment of God; they can only "profit" when worthily sustained.*—Baptism with water cannot cleanse without the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

QUESTIONS.—What did the Jew condemn the Gentile for? How did he condemn himself in that? How did he think to escape the judgment of God? What did he despise? What did he really treasure up to himself? Has God respect to persons? To what then? Who will be justified before God? What will God bring into judgment, v. 16? What does this mean? How does the Apostle challenge the Jew? What terrible thing does he say about the Jews, v. 24? What does he say about circumcision?

Illustrations.—I. "ABHORREST IDOLS..COMMIT SACRILEGE."

See v. 22. "The Jews, from the Babylonish captivity even to the present day, abhor idolatry, to which they had been formerly addicted." Nevertheless, they were guilty of *sacrilege* "by withholding their offerings and dues, at least in part, through covetousness and irreligion, and thus ROBBING THE TEMPLE."

II. "NOT A JEW..OUTWARDLY."

See v. 28, 29. "He is not a true son of Abraham, a member of that spiritual Church of which the visible Church of the Jews was but the sensible form, who has nothing

but natural birth and fleshly circumcision to plead. The true 'circumcision is that of the heart;' the cutting off, and putting away, all its corrupt affections by the sanctification of grace: 'in the spirit,' which does not mean the spirit, or soul of man, which is expressed by 'the heart' in the preceding clause, but in the *spiritual* sense of the law, 'and not in the letter,' its literal sense merely."—*Richard Watson.*

FEBRUARY 9.—Morning Lesson.

FAULT-FINDERS ANSWERED AND REBUKED.—Mark ii. 14—28.

Summary.—Jesus shows Himself friendly to social outcasts, and thus greatly shocks the Pharisees; He rebukes them by explaining the object of His coming. He defends His disciples for not fasting, giving reasons why He did not then enjoin it upon them; and holds them guiltless in plucking and eating corn on "the Sabbath-day."

I. Fault found with Jesus Himself.—V. 14—17. *Levi*,—the same as Matthew, ch. ix. 9. *Sitting*,—"actually engaged in the business of his calling." *Receipt*, &c.—"Toll-booth," or gate. See Margin. *Arose*,—leaving his business at the bidding of Christ. *Followed*,—became His disciple. V. 15. *At meat*,—a "great feast" being given by Matthew in His honour, Luke v. 29. *Publicans*,—collectors of taxes for the Romans; probably former companions of Levi. *Sinners*,—notoriously such, or reported such because of their office. *Sat also*,—unbidden by Christ, but not unwelcome. *Many*,—disciples who had left all and *followed Him*. V. 16. *Scribes and Pharisees*,—professing to be very select in their own companions and conduct, and always seeking occasion against Christ. *How is it*, &c.,—we thought He had been a man of great sanctity. V. 17. *That are whole*,—who, like you, fancy themselves to be very good and holy. *That are sick*,—who feel their *need of the Physician*, will receive Him gladly. *I*,—the Physician, or Saviour. *Righteous*,—in their own estimation. *Sinners*,—not wrapped up in self-conceit, John ix. 39—41.

II. Fault found with the Disciples.—V. 18—28.

(1.) *For not fasting.*—V. 18—22. *Used*,—were accustomed *to fast;* and, perhaps, at that time, were actually doing so. *Why*, &c.—See what cunning these Pharisees display! If they wish to find fault with Jesus, they speak to the disciples; if with the disciples, to Jesus. V. 19, 20. See Illustration. V. 21. *New*,—(Margin, "raw, or unwrought,") "not fulled, or cleansed, by the cloth-dresser." *Taketh away*, &c.—"It would contract, and draw off a part of the garment, and thus make the *rent worse*." V. 22. *New wine into old bottles*,—made of leather, which, when old, would easily crack and burst if the wine were *new* and fermenting. *New bottles* would stretch and yield to the pressure of the wine without bursting.

(2.) *For plucking corn on the Sabbath.*—V. 23—28. *Corn*,—wheat, or barley. *To pluck*,—being hungry, (Matt. xii. 1,) a lawful act, Deut. xxiii. 25. V. 24. *Not lawful*,—i.e., "on the Sabbath-day," Matt. xii. 2. V. 26. *How He went*, &c.—See 1 Sam. xxi. 1—6. *Abiathar.*—The son of Ahimelech, who gave the loaves to David; and succeeded his father in the office. *Shewbread.*—Lev. xxiv. 5—9. V. 27. *For man*,—to serve his necessities, *and not* to make him a slave to ceremonial precepts concerning it. *Therefore*,—moreover,—in addition to this. *Lord*, having power to alter the law, or place it in abeyance for a good and necessary purpose.

Reflections.—1. *A fault-finding disposition is a very uncomfortable one.*—A man with this never has peace or rest. Look at these Pharisees, going now to Jesus, then to the disciples, complaining of this, and then of that: "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest." Take care not to cherish such a disposition.

2. *A conceit of our own goodness is an effectual barrier in the way of our salvation.*—Jesus came to save the "lost." If we do not feel ourselves lost, we shall not come to Him, v. 17.

3. *There is "a time to weep and a time to laugh,"* Eccles. iii. 4.—No one can be considered the more holy for being always gloomy.

4. *Care should always be taken in striving to correct an error, lest we make bad worse.*

5. *Man's wants must be supplied on*

the Sabbath as well as on other days.—But it should not be a day of feasting and revelling. "Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy."

QUESTIONS.—Who was "Levi?" What was he doing? Who called him away? Did he obey? What did he make for Jesus? Who sat with Him? Why did the Pharisees complain? What did Jesus say? What fault did they find with the disciples? How did Jesus answer them? What did He say about the bridegroom's friends? What about the "old garment," and "piece of new cloth?" What about the "new wine" and "old bottles?" What other fault did the Pharisees find? How did Jesus answer that? What did He say about David?

Illustration.—"CHILDREN OF THE BRIDECHAMBER."

See v. 19, 20. "That is, the bridemen, or men who had the special care of the bridechamber, and who were, therefore, his special friends, do not think of fasting while he is with them. With them it is a time of festivity and rejoicing; and mourning would not be appropriate. . . . I am *with* My disciples. It is with them a time of joy. When *I* am taken away, it will then be proper that they should fast."—*Barnes.*

FEBRUARY 9.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

MAN "CROWNED." — Psalm viii.; Hebrews ii.

For repetition, Psalm viii. 4, 5.

SUMMARY.—The Psalmist sings of the dignity of man in relation to the works of God around him, and in comparison with the angels. The Apostle also speaks of this, and of the privileges man has through the Gospel. He opens to man the prospect of future glory also, showing that it was for this Christ took upon Him our nature.

I. MAN'S PLACE OF HONOUR IN THE CREATION OF GOD.—Ps. viii.; Heb. ii. 5—8; Ps. viii. 1. *Our Lord*,—the Psalmist rejoices in his relation to God. *Exeellent*, —mighty, magnificent, glorious. *Thy name*,—used for God Himself. *Above the heavens*,—whose brightness the splendour of Thy Majesty far surpasses. V. 2. *Ordained*, &c.—"That is, Thou dost maintain the glory of Thy power, goodness, and providence, against the blasphemies of carnal wisdom, (Rom. viii. 7,) by the means of little children, destitute of the use of reason and speech, but whose birth, sustenance, and wonderful protection reprove the wickedness of atheists and such as are Thine enemies. As if he should say, Thou dost employ the little, feeble, and ignorant, for instruments of Thy glory, against the bold undertakings of the wise and mighty," Matt. xi. 25; Luke x. 21; 1 Cor. i. 27.—DIODATI. *Strength.*—This word is often taken for glory, because "strength" is the chief foundation of "glory." *Still*,—suppress and keep down. *The avenger*,—a deadly and much incensed enemy, Ps. xliv. 16. V. 3. *Thy heavens*, &c.—"The sun is not mentioned, because the heavens (the moon, planets, and stars) could not have appeared had he been present. Those he wished to introduce because of their immense variety, and astonishing splendour; and, therefore, he skilfully leaves out the sun, which would have afforded him but one object and one idea."—*Dr. A. Clarke. The work of Thy fingers.*—A most sublime expression. What a Hand to move, form, and launch all those globes! See Illustration I. *Ordained*,—"prepared and established," giving them their places, fixing their services, and keeping them in orderly motion in their orbits. The planet Jupiter, which weighs one thousand four hundred times as much as the earth, moves at the rate of twenty-nine thousand miles an hour; the speed of other stars is much greater. V. 4. *Man*,—frail, sickly, mortal. *Son of man*,—Adam, "the fallen child of a fallen parent." *Mindful of..and visitest*,—in Thy works of providence, Job vii. 17, 18; but especially in mercy and grace, Heb. ii. 6, 9. V. 5. *A little lower.*—See Illustration II. *Crowned him*, &c.,—i.e., in his person and constitution, Gen. i. 26, 27. V. 6. *To have dominion*,—Gen. i. 28, which was not given to the angels, Heb. ii. 5, 7. V. 7, 8. Compare Heb. ii. 5—8. *All things in subjection*,—viz., *the works of Thy hands*, Gen. ix. 2; Ps. viii. 6—8; *the world to come*,—v. 5, and ch. vi. 5; i.e., the age of the Gospel dispensation. *We see not yet.*—Man's dominion over the

inferior animals and the material world is not so absolute and universal now as it was meant to be; and the consummation of his MORAL reign can be looked for only in the personal dignity and triumph of Jesus, v. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28.

II. MAN'S PROSPECT OF GLORY THROUGH THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS.—Heb. ii. 1—4, 9—18.

(1.) *In His teachings.*—V. 1—4. *We ought,*—it is peculiarly necessary. *Heed,*—so as to obey. *Slip,*—Margin, "run out, as leaking vessels." V. 2. *Spoken by angels,*—the Mosaic law, Acts vii. 53. *A just recompense,*—was strictly punished according to Num. xv. 30, 31. V. 3. *If we neglect,*—not only if we commit sin, but if we are careless about this *salvation* from it. *So great,*—both because of its Author, and because it "snatches from hell and lifts to heaven." *Which at the first,* &c.—Christ's personal ministry was the beginning of the Gospel: Apostles established and expounded what Christ taught. V. 4. *God also,*—established it as His Truth by *signs,* &c. *Gifts,*—"distributions," various powers conferred, 1 Cor. xii. 7—11.

(2.) *In His sufferings and sympathy.*—Heb. ii. 9—18. *But we see,*—as the promise of what man shall be. *A little lower,*—i.e., in being man. *For* (Margin, "by")—"on account of".... *crowned,* &c. Compare Phil. ii. 8—11. *Should taste,*—"an expression denoting both the reality of his death, and the shortness of its continuance." V. 10. *It became,*—it was fitting and proper. *For whom,*—whose glory. *By whom,*—whose wise, strong hand, John i. 3. *Many sons,*—the multitude of the adopted ones, Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6, 7. *Unto glory,*—their inheritance. *Captain,*—Leader, Chief, Prince. *Perfect,*—qualified fully to sympathise with and save them. V. 11. *For..all of one,*—partakers of the same nature. *Not ashamed,*—though so highly exalted and so "crowned." V. 12. *Thy name,*—the glorious character of God, Ps. xxii. 22; John xvii. 6, 26. *The Church,*—the assembly of the faithful. V. 13. See Ps. xviii. 2, and Isai. viii. 18. *The children,*—"of God by faith." *Partakers,* &c.—As they were men, He became man. *Through death,*—by dying Himself. *Destroy,*—not literally, but crush his power. V. 15. *And deliver,*—from his, till then, hopeless tyranny. *Subject,* &c.,—living daily in the greatest dread of it. V. 16. See Margin. *Took not,*—so as to aid or deliver. *In all things,*—sin only excepted. V. 17. *Behoved,*—it was right and necessary. *That He might be,* &c.—Which He could not have been without personal participation and practical knowledge. *In things,*—of God. *Reconciliation,*—expiation, or atonement. *Able to succour,*—to set an example of endurance, and know HOW to strengthen with sympathy and help, ch. iv. 16.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Man is God's representative on earth.*—He was made to "have dominion." Yet his dignity among the works of creation was but an earnest of the "honour and glory" with which Jesus should be crowned; his natural dominion, a dim setting forth of the spiritual reign of Christ.

2. *Sin has robbed man of his crown, and made him a slave.*—God "made him a little lower than the angels;" sin has sunk him to a condition "little above the oxen that graze the field." What a lesson of humility is there in the change!

3. *The light of future glory relieves the gloom of present sorrow.*—The crowning of Jesus is a promise, in fact, to us. His design is to "bring many sons to glory;" and this through His own condescension and sufferings. How should we love Him!

4. *In seeking that future crown of glory, much of our strength and encouragement comes from the sympathy and example of the Saviour Himself.*—See v. 18, and ch. xii. 1—4.

QUESTIONS.—What does the Psalmist say of the name of God? What of "babes and sucklings?" Who made the "heavens," &c.? How is God "mindful" of man? How has He "visited" him? How was man "crowned" at his creation? What was his "dominion?" How has man suffered in it? Why should we attend to what Jesus speaks? What will happen to us if we do not? Why is "salvation" great? What did Christ suffer? Where is He now? Why is He a "merciful and faithful High-Priest?" Why is He able to succour the tempted?

Illustrations.—I. "THE WORK OF THY FINGERS."

See v. 3. "The mass of the sun is three hundred and fifty-four thousand nine hundred

and thirty-six times that of the earth; so that, were its centre brought to the centre of the earth, it would not only fill up the orbit of the moon, but would extend nearly as far again. But this is as nothing compared with the bulk of some of the stars. Who can conjecture the magnitude of a body which would fill the vast orbit of the earth! But, though our mean distance from the sun is ninety-five millions of miles, and that of Uranus about nineteen times greater, or one billion, eight hundred million miles, the bright star in Lyra has a diameter which, it has been said, could nearly fill that orbit! The Milky Way derives its brightness from the diffused light of bodies, each of which may be equal to that of Lyra, and of which fifty thousand passed through the field of Sir W. Herschel's telescope in an hour."—*Dr. Harris.*

II. "CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR."

See Psalm viii. 5; Hebrews ii. 7

"Him with glorious majesty Thy grace vouchsafed to crown:
Transcript of the One in Three, He in Thine image shone.
Foremost of created things, Head of all Thy works he stood;
Nearest the great King of kings, And *little less than God.*"—*C. Wesley.*

FEBRUARY 16.—MORNING LESSON.

SIN AND SALVATION. — Romans iii. 9 — 26.

For repetition, verses 25, 26.

SUMMARY.—Notwithstanding the advantages of the Jews, the Apostle declares them to be sinners equally with the Gentiles, and that they could not be saved by the deeds of the law in which they rested. He then teaches that the way of salvation for all is by faith in Jesus Christ, and that this faith gives no license to sin.

I. THE HELPLESSNESS OF SINFUL MAN.—V. 9—20. *Are we better*,—through the advantage we have, v. 1, 2. *No!*—not as to justification before God, *for we have before proved*, &c., (Margin, "charged,") properly convicted, or brought in guilty, ch. i. 20—32; ch. ii. *Under sin*,—its tyranny and curse, from which the law cannot release us, v. 20. *As it is written*,—speaking to Jews, he quotes the authority of their own Scriptures. V. 10—18 are quotations from the Psalms and Prophets, showing what these sacred writers thought of the moral state of the Jews: (1.) *As to disposition and pursuits*, v. 11, 12. *Unprofitable*,—"putrid and offensive, like fruit that is spoiled." (2.) *As to conversation*, v. 13, 14. *Open sepulchre*,—their speech is corrupt, and loathsome. *Poison*, &c.,—i.e., using slanderous, *cursing*, words of *bitterness*. (3.) *As to conduct*, v. 15—18.—When not murderous, theirs is not the *way of peace;* and, at the best, the *fear of God* has no place in their heart. V. 19. *Now we know*,—all allow this. *The law*,—the Old Testament. *To them*,—to whom it was specially given. *That*,—judged by its teachings and convicted, *every mouth*, &c. *All the world*,—Jews as well as Gentiles. *Become*, &c.—See Margin. V. 20. *Therefore*,—or because v. 20 is true, the latter part of v. 19 is established. *Be justified*,—forgiven for that of which he is found guilty, v. 9. *The knowledge*,—the conduct of man being shown to be in sad contrast with the claims of the law, ch. vii. 7.

II. THE STRENGTH OF GOD'S GRACE THROUGH FAITH.—V. 21—31. *But now*,—that the guilt and hopelessness of man are proved. *The righteousness*, &c.—God's plan of justifying men, ch. i. 17. *Without*,—regard to personal obedience to *the law*. *Being witnessed*,—being taught in the Old Testament, Acts xxvi. 22, 23. V. 22. *By faith*,—without works, ch. iv. 5, 6. *No difference*,—in natural state and desert, v. 23; nor in privilege, v. 24. *Freely*,—without money or price, Isai. lv. 1. *The redemption*,—"the price Christ has paid." V. 25. *Whom*,—He was Himself the price. *Set forth*,—"foreordained," 1 Peter i. 20. *A propitiation*,—a sacrifice to appease an offended God. *His blood*,—or death, as the precise object of faith. *Remission*,—(Margin, "passing over,") or forgiveness. V. 26. *To declare*, &c.—To

manifest both His justice and mercy. *That He might be just*,—show Himself to be strictly righteous, and yet the merciful Pardoner *of him*, &c. V. 27. *Excluded*,—shut out from Jew as well as Gentile. V. 28. *We conclude*,—this is the sum of the argument. V. 30. *One God*,—of all men, will save all on the same terms. V. 31. *We establish*,—by showing how its authority is upheld, and its wrath averted from man, v. 25, 26; Gal. iii. 13.

REFLECTIONS.—1. "*All have sinned;*" *all are equally helpless and hopeless.*

2. *All are redeemed by Christ*, v. 22, 24—26.—His precious blood is the purchase of our pardon and peace with God, 1 Peter i. 18, 19; Hymn 28.

3. *All must come in the same way for salvation*, v. 30.—No matter to what nation, to what religious sect, to what social class he may belong. See John iii. 36.

4. *All should give to God the glory of His grace and wisdom.*—1 Cor. i. 24; Rom. xi. 32, 33.

QUESTIONS.—What advantage had the Jew? v. 2. Why did not this avail for his acceptance with God? v. 9. How does St. Paul impress the Jews with their own sinfulness? What does he say about their character? conversation? conduct? What is the state of all men before God? Is there any hope for them? How? Why can God be gracious to sinners? What is Christ? v. 26. In what way will God justify us? May all be saved thus?

Illustration.—"THE POISON OF ASPS."

See v. 13, and Ps. cxl. 3. "The *asp*, or adder, is a species of serpent, whose poison is of such active operation, that it kills almost the instant that it penetrates, and that without remedy. It is small, and commonly lies concealed, often in the *sand* in a road, and strikes the traveller before he sees it. It is found chiefly in Egypt and Libya."—*Barnes.*

FEBRUARY 16. — AFTERNOON LESSON.

MOSES AND AARON.—Exodus iv. 10—31.

SUMMARY.—Moses being still unwilling to go into Egypt, the Lord appoints his brother Aaron to go with him, and speak for him. Moses obtains leave of Jethro to go, and is further instructed by God. The Lord sends Aaron to meet Moses; the two go down together, and so persuade the children of Israel, that they believe and worship.

I. THE LAST OBJECTION MET.—V. 10—17. *Not eloquent*,—(Margin, not "a man of words,") "not a good speaker." *Heretofore*, &c.—See Margin: not before Thy appearance to me, nor since. *Slow*, &c.,—"speaking with hesitation and interruption of voice," yet what he did say was with power, Acts vii. 22. V. 11. *Have not I*,—power to unloose thy tongue and make thy speech graceful and flowing? V. 12. *Now therefore*,—trust in this My promise, I will not only give thee power of speech, but of argument. V. 13. *O my Lord*,—as though he had said, "Do not be angry with me for replying again." *Send*,—"a man better qualified than I am." V. 14. *Anger.. kindled*, &c.,—because this entreaty implied unbelief of God's power and promise, v. 11, 12. *The Levite*,—so called by anticipation, or as being then a prominent man in the tribe. *Speak well*,—is eloquent. *Cometh forth*,—shall come at My request, v. 27. *Will be glad*,—to share this mission and burden with thee, and, although thy elder brother, will not envy thy superior calling and place. V. 15, 16. In this way the chain of communication was made complete: God would give them both a rich qualification; He would dictate to Moses, Moses to Aaron, and Aaron would be *spokesman*,—effectively setting forth to the people God's will and gracious instructions. V. 17. *This rod*,—as "ensign of Divine authority and power," v. 20. *Do signs*,—before the people and Pharaoh as I have before thee, v. 2—4.

II. A DOUBLE CONSENT.—V. 18—26. *Moses went*,—consenting at length to the will of God. *Returned*,—from Horeb to Jethro's tents, ch. iii. 1. *My brethren*,—"kindred and countrymen." *Yet alive*,—Moses had been away from them forty years. *Go*,—thus Jethro,

in turn, consents to part with Moses. V. 19. *In Midian,*—another appearance and command. *The men are dead,* &c.—An encouragement which, probably, was much needed, ch. ii. 15, 23. V. 20. *Upon an ass,*—or asses: he had several, no doubt; one could not carry them all. *Returned,*—for he had come out of Egypt. V. 21. *In thine hand,*—given the power to do, v. 6—9. *I will harden,*—suffer to be hardened; i.e., leave him to himself, refusing softening grace. V. 22. *Shalt say,*—the first fulfilment of God's promise, v. 12, 15. *My firstborn,*—a term of endearment and love, Ps. lxxxix. 27. V. 23. *Thy firstborn,*—beloved ones; a dark prophecy fearfully fulfilled, ch. xii. 29.

III. Moses and Aaron as Co-Workers.—V. 27—31. *Said to Aaron,*—probably in Egypt. *In the mount of God,*—so that, either he was plainly told to go there, or else he was secretly influenced to go. *Kissed him,*—the usual mode of salutation in the East. V. 28. *All the signs,*—to persuade him that God had spoken the words. V. 29. *Went,*—"co-workers with their God." *The elders,*—heads of the tribes. V. 31. *The people believed,*—convinced by the signs which Moses and Aaron showed them. *Had visited,*—i.e., seen, ch. iii. 7, 16. *Affliction,*—for such their life of slavery really was. *Bowed their heads,*—the outward sign of *worshipping* in the East, as kneeling is with us, Gen. xxiv. 26.

Reflections.—1. *It is wise frankly to acknowledge our infirmities, especially if they are likely to hinder us in the work of the Lord.*—Moses was none the less qualified for his mission because he felt his infirmity of speech. And we are never likely to be better thought of, or qualified for any office, by an attempt to hide our deficiencies.

2. *But these should not lead us to distrust God's promise, or disobey His command.*—With Moses the sense of infirmity was greater than his faith in God's word, and so he was in danger of disobedience. God's command should over-rule all scruples; God's promise should raise us above all objections.

3. *God wisely distributes His gifts among men, so that they are mutually dependent.*—Moses has judgment, Aaron has eloquence, and thus they are fitted for two necessary parts of one great work. So God ever arranges it. See 1 Cor. xii. 18—27.

4. *Domestic affections and sympathies must never prevent us from going on God's errands.*—Jethro cheerfully consented that Moses should go, though, probably, he knew not the object of his going. And our Saviour has said to us, "He that loveth," &c. Matt. x. 37, 38.

5. *God has only to withhold His grace, and man's heart will harden itself.*—We should, therefore, be careful never to grieve the Holy Spirit.

6. *When men come to us with the authority of God, we should gladly receive their message.*—See v. 31.

Questions.—Why did Moses still hesitate to go down into Egypt? What did God promise him? Did he yet object? Did this please the Lord? Whom did He say should go with Moses? What did the Lord say of Aaron? What was Moses to take in his hand? What reason did Moses give Jethro for wishing to go into Egypt? Did Jethro consent? What did God say He would do to Pharaoh? v. 21. What does this mean? Why does the Lord call Israel His "firstborn?" Where did Moses and Aaron meet? What did they do before the children of Israel? Did the people believe? What else?

Illustrations.—I. "HE CAN SPEAK WELL."

See v. 14. "There are two things which complete a commander, as Pericles speaks in Thucydides: 'wisdom and eloquence,' which do not often meet in one person; but God is pleased to distribute these gifts, as He did to these two brethren. So Polydamas, in Homer, tells Hector: 'God's way is not to give all accomplishments to one man; but some to one, and some to others.'"—*Patrick.*

II. "THE ROD OF GOD."

See v. 20. "The sign of sovereign power, by which he was to perform all his miracles; once the badge of his shepherd's office, and now that by which he is to feed, rule, and protect his people Israel." "From the story of Moses's rod the heathens have invented the fables of the *thyrsus* of Bacchus, and the *caduceus* of Mercury. . . . Bacchus always carried in his hand the *thyrsus,* a rod wreathed with serpents, and by

which he is reported to have wrought many miracles. . . Homer represents Mercury taking his rod to work miracles, precisely in the same way as God commands Moses to take his."—*A. Clarke.*

FEBRUARY 23.—Morning Lesson.

THE FOES AND THE BRETHREN OF JESUS.—Mark iii. 20—35.

For repetition, verses 31—35.

Summary.—Jesus exposes the folly of those who accuse Him of being in league with Satan, and pronounces a severe judgment against them. He is told that His kinsmen, who thought Him mad, wish to speak with Him; but He answers that He recognises none as brethren save those who do the will of God.

I. His Worst Foes.—V. 20—30. *Cometh together*,—surrounding His home, v. 19. *Not so much as*,—"room, or opportunity, to get food." V. 21. *Friends*,—(Margin, "kinsmen,") "those belonging to Him," v. 31. *Heard*,—of His appointing the Apostles, and of His great zeal. *To lay hold*,—to put a restraint *on Him*, and take Him away. *They said.*—It was the common report. *Beside Himself*,—out of His mind; they could not understand His earnestness. V. 22. *Said*,—because He had cast out a devil, Matt. xii. 22. *Beelzebub*,—the name of an idol: here applied to Satan. See 2 Kings i. 2, 6. *Casteth He out.*—He could not do it Himself; we are sure God does not help Him; it must, therefore, be Satan. *Called them*,—knowing their thoughts, Matt. xii. 25. V. 23. *In parables*, — proposing something which would puzzle them, as *How can Satan*, &c.? V. 26. *Hath an end*,—destroys his kingdom and his hopes. V. 27. *No man can enter*, &c.—If, then, I have been able not only to *spoil* his goods, but cast Satan himself out, surely I am stronger than he. V. 28. *Blasphemies*, — "reproachful speeches uttered against God." V. 29. *Against the Holy Ghost*,—ascribing his miraculous works to the agency of Satan, v. 30. *Hath never forgiveness.*—What a terrible thought! *Eternal damnation*, —everlasting punishment, Matt. xii. 32.

II. His Best Friends.—V. 31—35. *His brethren*,—the children of Mary, the wife of Cleopas, or Alphæus, His mother's sister; or, see ch. vi. 3. *Standing without*,—the circle of people that *sat about Him*. *Calling Him*,—to come forth. V. 32. *The multitude.. said*,—for either He did not hear His brethren, or took no notice of their calling. *Who is My mother*, &c.?—Not said out of disrespect, but to fix the attention of His hearers upon the important truth He was about to utter. V. 34. *Looked round about*,—to give yet deeper impressiveness to His words. *Whosoever*,—whether My near relation by nature, or belonging to My own nation, or to an alien and strange race.

Reflections.—1. *How eager were the people to hear the words of Christ*, v. 20. —We should be like them; if we do not hear Christ, we cannot obey Him. It is a sad proof of godless indifference when people have no desire either to hear or read the word of God.

2. *Zeal for God is often accounted madness by the world*, v. 21.—Festus said to Paul: "Thou art beside thyself!" Acts xxvi. 24. Men may be zealous and enthusiastic in other things,—in pleasure, business, war, &c., —and nothing is said; but, as soon as a man becomes earnest in religion, he is called a fanatic. Yet in nothing ought a man to be so fervent as in the cause of God and of souls. That is a noble saying of St. Paul, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

3. *What an important truth is taught in v.* 25!—Only let a family live in union and love, and that "house" will stand; but no sooner do the members of the family begin to disagree and quarrel, than the interests of the family suffer; it is like loosening stones in a building, which surely prepares for its downfall.

4. *How fearful the consequences of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, v. 29! —Similar consequences will follow vexing or grieving Him. We can no more be saved without the work of the Spirit, than we can without the blood of Christ. Therefore, Eph. iv. 30.

5. *We must not trust to any outward or professed relationship to Christ.*—This is

well enough; but nothing short of *spiritual union* and actual obedience will avail us, Matt. vii. 21—23.

6. *A rich reward is here promised to those who do the will of God:*—intimate relationship with Christ involving many privileges and blessed prospects. See Rom. viii. 16—18; 1 John iii. 2; Rev. iii. 21.

QUESTIONS.—Why did the multitude come together again? What "friends" were they who sought to take Jesus? Why did they wish to take Him? What miracle had He just wrought? What did the scribes say about it? Who was Beelzebub? How did Jesus show the folly of this saying? What happens to a house divided against itself? What is "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost?" What are its consequences? Who stood "without," calling Jesus? Who are His true friends?

Illustration.—"BY THE PRINCE OF THE DEVILS."

See v. 22. "It is a fact, that they affect to eject the evil spirits by their 'prince of devils.' Vyravar is the Hindoo prince of devils; and by whatever demon a man is possessed, or by whatever kind of sickness he may be afflicted, his offerings for deliverance are principally made to Vyravar. But should he, as the monarch of demons, possess a man, then the offering must be made to Siva, or to Scandan, his son."—*Roberts.*

FEBRUARY 23.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE SEED AND THE SOIL.—Mark iv. 1—20.

SUMMARY.—This familiar parable shows us to what different people the Gospel is preached, and with what various results. We could not have understood it so well if the Saviour Himself had not explained it.

I. THE PARABLE.—V. 1—9. *Began again,*—"after the interruption," ch. iii. 31—35. *Sea-side,*—at Capernaum, by the sea of Galilee. *In the sea,*—i.e., in the ship on the sea, Matt. xiii. 2. V. 2. *By parables,*—"similitudes taken from natural objects to illustrate spiritual or moral subjects." *In his doctrine,*—or course of instruction. V. 3. *Hearken,*—give ear, give heed. *Went out,*—into the open country. V. 4. *Wayside,*—beaten footpaths across the cultivated tract or plot. *Fowls came and devoured,*—it was not covered by harrowing, as our corn is. V. 5. *Stony ground,*—a thin covering of earth, and hard rock below it. *Immediately.. because it had no depth,* &c.—In striking downwards the fibre soon came into contact with the rock, which it could not penetrate, so it soon sprouted upwards; but the thin soil was not enough to nourish it in strength, and the first heat of the sun, consequently, withered it, v. 6. V. 7. *Thorns,*—rough bushes, always to be found on open moors or commons. V. 8. *Good ground,*—where the soil was rich, deep, and well-worked with the plough, &c. *Some an hundred.*—See Illustration II.; and, for further explanation of the former verses, see Illustration I. V. 9. *Hath ears,*—a disposition to listen, a hearty desire to understand what is said.

II. THE INTERPRETATION.—V. 10—20. *Alone,*—"retired apart from the multitude." *About Him,*—having the privilege of free access and unrestrained intercourse. V. 11. *Unto you,*—the inner circle of My friends, who are to be My witnesses to the world. *Mystery,*—secret, yet not something utterly incomprehensible, but to be concealed for a time. *That are without,*—"obstinate unbelievers." V. 12. *That seeing,* &c.—They saw or heard the natural meaning, but could not understand the spiritual significance. *Lest,* &c.—Blindness from God had fallen on them for their determined rejection of the Lord's Messiah. See Matt. xiii. 13—15; Isai. vi. 9, 10. V. 13. *Know ye not..how then,* &c. ?—This is plain and obvious enough; others are obscure and difficult. V. 15. *Satan cometh,*—like a fierce, foul bird of prey. V. 16, 17. *Immediately receive it .. immediately offended.*—Pleased at once with what they hear, and as quickly parting with it, if it is likely to cost comfort or reputation. V. 19. *Lusts of other things,*—of which the world is full, Luke viii. 14; 1 John ii. 16. *Choke,*—as the thorns do the seed. V. 20. *And receive,*—"into an honest and good heart," Luke viii. 15.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *The seed is the word of God; the soil is the human heart.*—As seed is sown by the husbandman broadcast over the face of

the country, so the word of God is preached to all men without respect of character or class. It is the word of God's grace offering salvation, and our Lord's command is, "Go," &c., Mark xvi. 15.

2. *The result, or harvest, depends, not on the quality of the seed, but on the nature of the soil.*—The seed is the same wherever sown; so that, if it "bring forth" in one place, it could in another. Upon the state of man's heart depends the fruit or fruitlessness of the word of God.

3. *To which class of hearers or readers do we belong?*—Our Lord mentions four, putting the lowest first:—

(1.) Does the word ever enter our hearts at all? or, are they like the "wayside," trodden and hard, so that no impression whatever is made? v. 15.

(2.) When it does enter, does it abide there? Do we cherish it, and resolve to keep it at all risks? Or, are we like the "stony places," lacking soil; so that the word does not take firm root? v. 17.

(3.) Is the soil of our hearts productive. Is there nothing in us to prevent the fruitfulness of the word? O, what numbers of things there are to choke it; and how many people become "unfruitful" in consequence! v. 19.

(4.) Are our hearts honest and good? Have we a ready disposition, a strong desire, to do the will of God? Remember all is in vain, unless we bring forth fruit by repentance, faith, love to God, and holiness of life.

4. *We are responsible for the state of our hearts when we hear God's word.*—They may be prepared by the grace of the Spirit, if we seek it in prayer.

Questions.—What is a "parable?" What is this parable about? What is meant by the "seed?" What by the "soil?" What is the "wayside?" What class of hearers does it represent? Who are represented by the "stony ground?" Who by the "thorns?" Who by the "good ground?" To which class do we belong? Whose fault is it if the Word is not fruitful?

Illustrations.—I. "THERE WENT OUT A SOWER TO SOW."

See v. 3. "The expression implies that the sower, in the days of our Saviour, lived in a hamlet, or village, as all these farmers now do; that he did not sow near his own house, or in a garden fenced or walled, for such a field does not furnish all the basis of the parable. There are neither roads, nor thorns, nor stony places in such lots. He must go forth into the open country, as these have done, where there are no fences; where the path passes through the cultivated land; where thorns grow in clumps all round; where the rocks peep out in places through the scanty soil; and where, also, hard by, are patches extremely fertile. Now here we have the whole four within a dozen rods of us. Our horses are actually trampling down some seeds which have fallen by this wayside, and larks and sparrows are busy picking them up. That man, with his mattock, is digging about places where the rock is too near the surface for the plough; and much that is sown there will wither away, because it has no deepness of earth. And not a few seeds have fallen among this *bellan*, and will be effectually choked by this most tangled of thorn-bushes. But a large portion, after all, falls into really good ground, and four months hence will exhibit every variety of crop, up to the richest and heaviest that ever rejoices the heart even of an American farmer."—*—The Land and the Book.*

II. FRUIT A HUNDREDFOLD.

See v. 20. "The return of a hundred for one is not unheard of in the East, though always mentioned as something extraordinary; thus it is said of Isaac that he sowed, 'and received in the same year a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him;' (Gen. xxvi. 12;) and other examples of the same kind are not wanting. Herodotus mentions that two hundredfold was a common return in the plain of Babylon, and sometimes three; and Niebuhr mentions a species of maize that returns four hundredfold. Wetstein has collected many examples from antiquity of returns as great as, or far greater than, that mentioned in the text."—*Trench.*

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THE
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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

FEED MY LAMBS.

BY THE REV. THOMAS JACKSON.

WHEN our blessed Lord said to St. Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" the Apostle answered, "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs." (John xxi. 15.)

This charge, uttered by our Saviour, suggests to a reflecting mind many important questions, each of which requires an answer. May I request the attention of my readers to some thoughts which have occurred to me in reading this part of the inspired narrative?

I. *Who are the "lambs" of which our Lord speaks, and which He calls His own?*

The answer is, that a lamb is the young of a sheep; and that the term "lambs," when used by our Lord in reference to mankind, is evidently to be understood as denoting the junior members of His Church, including both young converts and little children. Young converts belong to Christ, as members of His Church, although their religious and moral habits are not confirmed: their faith is weak; they are apt to be discouraged when they meet with difficulties and trials; and there is an observable feebleness and hesitation in their movements. Of many of them it can, as yet, hardly be said that they "*run*" "the race set before" them. They walk with difficulty and fear; especially when obstructions lie in their path.

Little children, especially the children of Christian parents, and, most of all, baptised children, are lambs of Christ's flock. They are not only His, as being the purchase of His blood, but as having been solemnly dedicated to Him in a sacrament of His own institution; just as the posterity of Abraham were regarded as standing in a special relation to God by virtue of their circumcision. The Lord owned Himself to be their God, and they confessed themselves to be His people; for sacraments are covenanting ordinances. All, therefore, who have received the initiatory sacrament of Christianity stand in a near and peculiar relation to God, their Creator, their Redeemer, and their Sanctifier. They are pledged to submit to

His will; and He stands pledged by promise, in return, to bestow upon them the blessings of His salvation.

II. *With what are these lambs of Christ to be fed?*

The answer is, they are to be fed with the food which Christ has provided for them: that is, with evangelical truth. Long before His incarnation mankind were taught to expect Him in the character of a Shepherd; and, as such, it was said, "He shall feed His flock," including both old and young; (Isaiah xl. 11;) and He Himself placed upon record the promise, "I will give you pastors," meaning under-shepherds, "according to Mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jer. iii. 15.) By whatever hands the food is directly administered, the food itself is of His own providing. It consists of Divine "knowledge,"—the knowledge of God, and of the things of God; which is so imparted to the flock, that they may "understand" it; that is, digest it, and reduce it to practice. This "knowledge" is be found in the teaching of our Saviour, and in that of the Apostles, whom He appointed to complete the Gospel-revelation after He had ascended to heaven. This "knowledge," in all its comprehensiveness, we find embodied in the New Testament. It relates to God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, to the sacrifice and intercession of our Saviour; the nature and method of salvation; to the privileges, duties, and hopes of believers. These elements of "knowledge," and others connected with them, constitute "green pastures," where the flock of Christ, both old and young, both lambs and sheep, may feed under a bright sky and a cheering sun; while, at times, "the clouds drop fatness," and refreshing breezes never fail. Well may "the chief Shepherd" be denominated "great" and "good!"

III. *In what manner are His lambs to be fed?*

The answer to this inquiry is to be found in the character of Christ, and in the nature of His doctrine. He is "meek and lowly in heart:" He is kind, merciful, benign, and condescending: He "careth for the flock:" He "laid down His life" for them. The under-shepherds, let them be who they may, ought to imbibe His Spirit, and copy His example. To be stern, harsh, severe, and repulsive in the treatment of His lambs cannot but be offensive to Him; especially on the part of them who are sent to declare His lovingkindness and tender mercy. Such conduct is likely to drive the lambs farther from Him, instead of drawing them to Him, that He may fold them in His arms of love.

Some children are unapt to learn. Their apprehension is naturally dull, and their memory is leaky. They apply themselves, and

desire to learn; but, with all their efforts, they make little progress. This was the case with some of our Lord's disciples. He therefore explained to them in private what they had misapprehended in His public discourses. When He found them inattentive, He reproved them; but not otherwise. A better example His servants cannot follow, whether they teach the "sheep" from the pulpit, or the "lambs" in the school. St. Paul exhorted Christians to "be patient toward all *men;*" and they ought to be specially patient towards *children*, who are without experience, and have everything to learn. Impatient teachers of children would do well to remember how much they themselves owe to the kind forbearance of those who were entrusted with their early training.

IV. *Why are the lambs of Christ to be fed?* In other words, why are children and young converts to be carefully instructed in the blessed truths of the Gospel?

The answer is, that young converts may become confirmed Christians; and that little children may attain to the character of those whom Christ acknowledges as His "sheep." They "hear His voice," so as to obey His will, whether He addresses them in terms of alarm, warning them to flee from the wrath to come; of mercy, inviting them to come to Him in humble, earnest, and believing prayer; of authority, enjoining upon them the duty of strict obedience to all His commandments; or of promise, encouraging them to trust in Him for all needful blessings in this world, and for glory in the world to come. They also "follow" Him, while He goes before them in the paths of holiness and righteousness; in the practice of true devotion; and in zealous efforts to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men. Instruction in every form is only a means to an end; and Christian instruction is intended to issue in Christian experience and Christian practice upon earth, and hereafter in the happiness of heaven. Such is the noble enterprise contemplated in the simple words, "Feed My lambs."

V. *Upon whom does this duty devolve?*

In the first instance, as we have seen, it devolved upon an Apostle, who has long since fulfilled his allotted task of duty, and passed to his final account. But the Lord Jesus has still "lambs" in His flock, and will have till the end of time; and it is His will that in every instance they should be fed in the pastures which He has provided.

The duty of feeding them falls, in the first instance, upon their parents, who are bound, while they supply their temporal necessities,

to impart to them evangelical "knowledge," as their opening minds are prepared to receive it. Fathers and mothers are charged to "train up" their rising offspring for Christ and heaven, as well as to prepare them for the active duties of ordinary life.

Children, as they become old enough, are generally sent to school; and such tutors should be selected for them as will care for their moral and religious interests, as well as for their advancement in literature and science. Religious parents should be anxious that their children should be Christians as well as scholars: zealous philanthropists, as well as accomplished men of business.

Among the educational establishments of the present times, Sunday-schools occupy a most important place, so far as the children of the working-classes are concerned. Millions of children are at this day indebted to these institutions for their knowledge of letters and of Christianity. How necessary, then, it is that all those who take part in conducting these schools, and especially the teachers, should themselves be well acquainted with Gospel-truth, and imbued with its spirit; so that they may instruct the children with an enlightened mind, and with the melting words which are dictated by holy love!

But Christian Ministers, who have succeeded the Apostles in the pastoral oversight of the Church, are especially called upon to take part in this holy and benevolent service. If children are admitted into the Church by baptism, they are certainly included in the pastoral charge; and the men who thus admit them are bound to see to their Christian training. To a certain extent they are responsible for the souls committed to their care, and must render an account of them in the day of the Lord.

VI. *Whence arises the obligation to "feed" the "lambs" of Christ's flock?*

The answer is, from the express command of the Son of God, to whom they, of right, belong. He redeemed them by His blood, and that for the express purpose of saving them from sin, and of conducting them to heaven. He is pleased to employ His truth as the instrument of their salvation. By His truth He brings them to repentance, and to the possession and exercise of faith; by His truth He regenerates and sanctifies them; and by His truth he regulates their conduct, sustains, and encourages them, till their labours and trials upon earth are ended, and they enter into "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

Let all, then, who are in any way connected with young converts and with children, whether as parents, Ministers, tutors, class-

leaders, or Sunday-school teachers, remember their high and holy calling. The objects of their care are the "lambs" of Christ's flock, whom they are to "feed,"—not with the hemlock of Rationalism, of Popery, of Ritualism, or any other form of anti-Christian error, but with "the truth as it is in Jesus," and as He has been pleased to place it before them in the Inspired Records: and let them, in every lesson which they give, aim at His glory, and at an entire compliance with His will, relying wholly upon His promised blessing for a successful issue.

HOW TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL TEACHERS.

KEEP well impressed upon your mind that the work in which you are engaged is a *religious* work, and can only be successful, either to yourselves or your children, BY THE BLESSING OF GOD.

Bear in mind that in a Sunday-school the object is not merely to give lessons in religious *knowledge*, but *to train the hearts* of the children in habits of *trust*, *reverence*, *obedience*, *humility*, *gentleness*, *truth*, *piety*, *and love*.

Enter, therefore, upon your work in a spirit of personal devotion and prayer.

To assist yourselves in this, set apart regularly every week some time for private preparation.

Do not postpone it till Saturday, lest something interfere to prevent your doing it then, and so you lose the opportunity altogether.

Look at the lesson you are going to give on the following Sunday.

Kneel down, and ask God to guide you, and to teach you, by His Holy Spirit, that you may be able to teach your children. Rise, and read the lesson over carefully. Note down in order, as they occur, (in a private memorandum-book kept for the purpose,) any points that strike you. Think of yourself as a child, and put to yourself such questions as you think a child would ask. Think over the character of each child, and observe how the several points of the lesson are applicable to one or to another.

Be as simple as possible in your explanations.

When your lesson has thus been carefully gone through, read it over once again to yourself, and the notes you have made, together, so as to imprint its entire truth upon your own heart.

Your preparation having been completed in this way, again kneel down, and ask the Holy Spirit to bless and prosper you in what you have thus been engaged in.

A lesson so made ready every week, will not fail to be a great blessing both to your scholars and to your own soul.

Set apart regularly every SUNDAY, either early in the morning before you enter upon your school-duties, or in the afternoon, immediately after your school is over, some stated portion of time—say half-an-hour—for prayer for your scholars.

Retire to your own private room, and "shut thy door:" take with you a list of your scholars; and, on your knees, name each child in order unto God. Call to mind the particular character of each: think what faults each one has been guilty of, whether deceit, or disobedience, or ill-temper, or irreverence at prayer, or any other misconduct; and entreat that

grace may be given to that child to produce in its heart the opposite virtue, whatever it may be; to be truthful instead of deceitful, meek and obedient instead of cross-tempered and sulky, devout and attentive instead of careless and irreverent: and so forth.

Thus learn to *watch* over your scholars, and to *pray* for them. It will be all the better if the prayer be *vocal;* that is, not mere *silent thinking* over your children when you are on your knees; but mentioning *with your voice*, so that you can hear yourself speak, each child individually *by name* unto God.—[*Extracted.*]

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

"O, MA'AM! SHE DID NOT BELIEVE ME."

The Sunday-school teacher should not allow all thought of the class to end with Sunday. When the best coat is folded up, and laid with care in its drawer, the care for the welfare of the children should not be locked up with it. All interest in the little ones should not be laid aside with the best bonnet. I hope none of the readers of this Magazine will find it in their hearts to say what a Sunday-school teacher said to me, a few weeks ago.

It was Saturday evening; and, on meeting in the street, we were exchanging a few friendly, commonplace remarks, when one of my little scholars came up to us; and, with a confiding trust which was very precious to me, placed her hand on my arm, and said, "Teacher!" I spoke a few words to her, and, with a light heart, and a cheerful "Good-bye, teacher!" the child ran off.

I turned to my companion to resume our conversation; but he was looking so cross and disagreeable, that I waited for him to speak first. He did so, saying, "Why, Miss H——, do you notice those dirty little brats? I never know my scholars, excepting on Sundays." I answered him, shortly, "that I spoke to them thus kindly because I hoped to meet them in heaven;" and, bidding each other good evening, we parted: but his remark set me musing.

Know our scholars only on Sundays,—when, with their best clothes, best manners, and best language, they sit for a couple of hours listening to our teaching! and then, when we meet on Monday the loving faces that were so anxiously lifted to ours the previous day, drinking in our instruction, are we to pass them with a cool stare of indifference? teaching those tender hearts, in their first budding, a lesson of the falseness and hollowness of earthly friendship! Are you afraid of the scornful smile or supercilious sneer of your fashionable acquaintances, if they see you talking to a little, bare-footed child, with a dress not made quite in the fashion?

Know you not that one loving throb of that child's heart is of more value to you than the lifelong friendship of the worldly and the frivolous? for they are "of the earth, earthy;" whereas of children Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The Sunday-school teacher should do his best to win the entire love, confidence, and trust of his charge; he should make his scholars understand that, while on Sunday he teaches them the commandment, "Honour thy father and mother," he feels interested in knowing whether, during the week, they have obeyed it.

You cannot properly understand the character of children, if you know nothing of their daily life; therefore, encourage them to tell you about their little trials, struggles, or victories, so

that you may help, advise, and encourage them as they may need.

I have a little girl in my class, living with an aunt who has adopted her; and who, though very indulgent and kind to her generally, sometimes misunderstands her, and causes the child (who is peculiarly sensitive) much needless sorrow.

Nellie R—— entered the class, one afternoon, with her dress in disorder, her hat tied loosely, her mass of yellow curls tangled and matted, and with her eyes looking red and swollen. This state of things was most unusual; for Nellie was remarkable for her cheerfulness, and invariably tidy appearance. The girls all asked her why she had been crying; but she did not seem willing to speak on the subject; so I told them not to question her any more.

As I was leaving the school, (having stayed behind for a few minutes' conversation with the Superintendent,) I saw Nellie walking slowly up the street. Her house was only a few doors from ours; so I overtook her: and when her little hand was safely clasped in mine, I said, "Well, Nellie, what is it, dear?"

"I'll tell you, teacher," she said; "but I'm afraid you'll think me very silly. Aunt told me to watch the meat which was roasting before the fire; and, whilst basting it, I dropped a little grease on the hearthstone. Aunt came up, and, when she saw the grease, scolded me very much, and told me to be more careful; for, if I dropped any more, I should go without any pudding for dinner. And O! Ma'am," continued the child, her voice choked with sobs, "I was so very careful, and never let another drop of grease fall; but aunt came up, and saw some grease which she had not seen before, and she slapped me, and sent me upstairs."

"And you lost your pudding, I suppose, Nellie?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"And so it was for the loss of the pudding you cried so bitterly," I said, feeling somewhat disappointed that Nellie should give such a reason for tears. The child snatched her hand from mine, and, dashing the tears from her eyes, looked at me reproachfully, and answered:—

"No, teacher; it was not the loss of the pudding that made me cry; but I told aunt the truth, and she did not believe me; and O, Ma'am, I'd never tell a lie. It was wrong of aunt," she continued, stamping with her foot, while the angry blood rushed over cheek and brow; "and I hate her, I do."

I was grieved and shocked at the child's vehemence: it was so unlike her to display such an ebullition of temper; for, in her class, she was the brightest, best-tempered little creature imaginable; and to see her now, with her face distorted by passion, her hands clenched tightly, while her voice trembled with rage, was indeed grievous. I knew it was useless to reason with Nellie while she was so excited; so I did all I could to soothe and compose her; and, having reached her home, I bade her "good afternoon," and told her cheerfully that we must have a little further conversation on the subject another time.

We did renew it, on the first opportunity; and very penitent and miserable little Nellie was, when I showed her how wicked it was to feel and speak as she had done, under the influence of passion. Very much astonished, and not a little frightened, she seemed, when I told her that, in God's eyes, hate in the heart was the same sin as murder by the hand. She said she would try to subdue her temper; and then, with a simplicity which made me smile, added, "But, you know, teacher, it's no wonder I'm bad-tempered; for Papa was very bad-tempered."

I often spoke to Nellie after this; and, by God's blessing, was enabled to do the child a great deal of good.

Now, if I had only known my scholars on Sunday,—that is, had taken no interest in them after they left the school,—I should have been ignorant of those traits in Nellie's character which were developed by this little incident. If I had not encouraged my little ones to look to me as a friend as well as a teacher, and to unburden themselves freely to me when in trouble, however trivial, the seeds of hatred and anger might have grown wild and unchecked in that child's heart, and have brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit, to the undoing, perhaps, of her earthly and everlasting peace.

Know our scholars only on Sunday! Shame on the lips that can utter such a sentiment. Nay, let us not only teach and guide our children; but let us love and cherish them, for the sake of the children's Advocate and Friend; whose loving words fell sweetly on the heart of many an anxious mother, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

M. E. Humphreys.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN.

The waste of human life, and the amount of suffering, among the children of the poor in London, and all the larger towns of Great Britain and Ireland, is very sad to think of. One out of every three born dies for want of food, clothes, and fresh air. The hospital in Great Ormond-street, London, is an institution of which all who have any sympathy with these tiny sufferers will be glad to know something. It is devoted to their comfort and help.

The building is an old-fashioned mansion, in which gay scenes were witnessed more than a century ago. A fine old oaken staircase leads to a drawing-room, the ceiling of which is still bright with scrolls of a beautiful blue; and upon the panels on the walls remain pictures of shepherds and shepherdesses, on fanciful banks, very quaint and prim. Along those walls, as in other rooms, very small beds are ranged, and occupied by the little invalids. The sight is less sad than might be supposed; for glad, childish laughter is heard, and all is done that can help to brighten the lot of the little sick folk. Across each bed, resting on the sides, is a board for toys; and every child has a number of playthings, for people are constantly sending some. One child will be setting out the animals of a Noah's ark, another amusing herself with a picture-book, gaily coloured. Some of them have become well enough to be out of bed, playing; or to sit by the fire, and be read to by one of the nurses, of whom there are thirteen in the hospital, beside the four ladies who superintend it. The Queen is its patron, and every year she sends valuable toys to the children. The Princesses, too, have sometimes visited the hospital.

When a child is dangerously ill, the parents usually may visit it at any hour of the day or night. Wednesday afternoon is generally the time for them to come and see their children; and then nearly every little bed has its visiters. A writer in "Aunt Judy's Magazine" says, "It is very touching to see, as I have done, a strong, rough-looking man sitting by the side of a little bed, with his arm placed tenderly round a frail little child of two years old, trying to amuse her with toys.

There was not much conversation going on between father and daughter, but they looked supremely happy. The silky, blond curls of the child were thrown back upon his strong chest: there they sat, evidently all the world, just then, to each other. There is sometimes a sad burst of crying from some little one, when she or he sees the dear home-face going away; and, as crying is very infectious, there are a good many tears shed over the toys in that first five minutes when the door closes, and the last kisses have been given. But a reaction is produced by the nurses, and by the most simple means. Tea is brought up, and nice cups taken round to the little mourners without loss of time; and the tears are soon wiped away."

From seventy to eighty children are taken into the house; and, in one room or other, each of them has a separate cot. Besides these, as many as ten thousand children are brought, every year, for medical attention from doctors and nurses.

QUEEN CHRISTINA AND THE GARDENER'S CHILD.

One fine summer-day, as Queen Christina, of Prussia, was pacing up and down the beautiful walks in her palace-garden, enjoying the perfumed air, and from time to time pausing to look at the lovely flowers, or listen to the singing birds, she saw upon the grass a little child, playing with the long stalks and the clover-heads. This was the daughter of one of the gardeners, a little girl about five years old.

The Queen approached the child, silently watched her play for a few moments, and finally, spoke to her. The child replied modestly, but fearlessly, to all the questions asked her. She was, indeed, a very lovely little girl. The Queen was so much pleased with her, that the very next day she sent one of her ladies to bring her to the palace.

The parents were quite astonished; but they dressed the child in her Sunday-clothes, and gave her into the charge of the Queen's waiting-maid.

When the little girl reached the palace, the Queen was just about sitting down to dinner. She, however, gave orders that the child should at once be brought to her. Stroking her fresh rosy cheeks, she had her placed upon a chair by her side, whence she could overlook the whole of the glittering and abundantly-laden table.

The kind, good-hearted Queen wanted to hear what the child would say when she saw the costly gold and silver vessels, and all the other pretty things adorning the royal table. She enjoyed, in anticipation, the delight of the innocent girl, which she presumed would be displayed, in ordinary childish fashion, by clapping of hands, and joyful, wondering exclamations.

But things turned out very differently from what she had expected.

The little one sat a moment quite still and solemn. Then she cast her eyes over the glittering scene before her. But no cry of astonishment followed this survey. On the contrary, the child looked quietly down upon the table, folded her tiny hands, and, in tones, sweet and childish, but loud enough to be heard throughout the whole dining-hall, repeated the following little prayer:—

"Christ's dear blood and righteousness
Be to me as jewels given,
Crowning me when I shall press
Onward through the gates of heaven."

Surely the good old custom of asking a blessing at table must still have been practised in the pious gardener's house; or this verse must have been part of the daily prayer of the little girl. As the food was already placed upon the royal table, and eyes were turned upon her,

the child naturally thought they wished her to say the blessing.

When she had finished, no one spoke for some time. All present were greatly surprised. It really seemed as if God Himself, through her sweet lips, had spoken to this brilliant assemblage of high-born lords and ladies.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

PRAISE YE THE LORD!

Praise the Lord! for He is glorious,
Over sin and death victorious.

Praise Him! angels round the throne;
Praise ye Him! the great Three-One!

Praise Him! saints, who, safe above,
Prove His everlasting love.

Praise Him! ye by grace forgiven,
Travelling on your way to heaven.

Praise Him! ye who bear the cross,
Suffering nobly in His cause.

Praise Him! sinners, while you may;
Him who spares you day by day.

Praise the Lord! for He is glorious,
Over sin and death victorious.

Sing, O heavens! thou earth proclaim,
Praises to His holy name!

MARIE.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

March 8.—SECTION III., QUESTION IV.

A Shipwrecked Boy.

A KIND father was reasoning with his son. He wished to persuade the lad to stay at home. The parent's injunction did not seem a hard one. The boy had everything provided for him needful to make him happy; but he knew that, whilst in his father's house, he would be expected to do what was right, and he desired sinful pleasure. So he was determined to leave his comfortable home, against his father's wish, and go to sea. His father gave him a Bible. The lad had not been at sea long before the ship in which he had sailed was wrecked, and everybody on board perished exeept this wicked lad. The next morning he was seen sitting on a rock, in the midst of the angry waves, reading a Book. When the ship was about to go down he had put the Bible in his pocket. He was marvellously delivered, and was brought safely from the rock. Though afterwards he became a good man, he always regretted the sin and folly of which he was guilty in leaving his good home.

March 15.—SECT. III., QUEST. V.

William and the Box.

Two brothers, Henry and William, were playing. William said, "Let us go down into the cellar, and play there." They went, although they were not sure that their parents would be pleased at their doing so. Soon after they entered the cellar, William spied a box which he had seen before. He said, "That is the box I wanted to look into, and Mamma forbade me; I will now see what is in it." Henry pleaded with him not to be so naughty. William, however, was determined. "Here are some rusty nails and empty bottles. Two bottles have 'poison' written on them. Does Mamma think I shall drink poison?" As he spoke, he tossed up one of the bottles, which seemed to have some water in it. He caught it, and it broke. Willie screamed with agony, for the bottle had been full of vitriol. He was burned all over. He lingered for some time in great suffering.

A few minutes before he died he said, "Mamma, forgive me!" Then he was heard to whisper, "Disobedience!" Almost immediately afterwards poor Willie died.

March 22.—SECT. III., QUEST. VI.

A Fijian Widow.

RAGEI, a man of some importance in a Fijian village, was taken ill, and was not likely to recover. His wife was only twenty-five years of age; yet, according to the cruel customs of Fiji, she would have to be strangled if her husband died. A Wesleyan Missionary (the Rev. John Malvern) resolved, if possible, to save her life. He, and some influential natives who were Christians, went to intercede on her behalf. They presented two whale's teeth to the chiefs. They had then to take a journey to plead with some other chiefs. To these they presented one very choice whale's tooth. In consequence of the presents and intercession, it was decided that the woman might live. Her husband died soon after; and the unhappy woman, knowing that, if she lived, she would be despised by all, besought those about her that they would kill her. This they were glad to do. So they put a rope around her neck, and endeavoured to choke her. She died a hard and cruel death; for the men were a long time before they could succeed in the attempt to deprive her of life; but at length they were successful. How dark and debased has human nature become by sin.

March 29.—SECT. III., QUEST. VII.

Mary's New Frock.

A LITTLE girl, named Mary, was trying on a new frock. Her kind mother was anxious that it should fit exactly, and look well. It proved to be all that could be reasonably desired. When the examination was complete, it occurred to the mother that there was another person in the house who would be pleased to see the child in her pretty new dress. She said, "Go, Mary, and show it to your grandmother." So the child went to the room where her good grandmother was busy at work, and told her why she had been sent. The aged woman laid down her knitting, and put on her spectacles, and surveyed Mary and her frock in all possible aspects. Grandmother was very loving, yet thought a word of caution or instruction needful at times. So, having leisurely scrutinized the dress, she said, with a serious smile, "It is very nice indeed; I hope you will enjoy wearing it. Tell your mother that the worst piece is in the middle."

April 5.—SECT. III., QUEST. VIII.

The Namaqua Chief.

CHRISTIAN Missionaries who were sent to Southern Africa found the people in a very degraded condition. They laboured faithfully and perseveringly among these unhappy heathen tribes, and the Lord blessed their efforts. Many Africans were truly converted to God; and a few of these were qualified, by the grace and gifts of God, to tell to their countrymen the way of salvation through Christ.

Frederick Buys was one who was very zealous in proclaiming God's truth, and had considerable success. But those who were unwilling to give up their sins, hated both the message and the messenger. Among these was one of the chiefs in Namaqualand. The Word of God reproved the sins in which he delighted. The wicked chief had never read nor heard what the infidels of Europe affirm; but he knew that the good Book condemned his bad ways. So one day he went to the house where Buys lived, in a great rage, and asked, "Is that God's word which you preach?" Buys replied that it was. "Then you must alter it; for I can hear no more of that." That chief had been born proud, self-willed, and sin-loving.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

March 8.—SECT. VI., QUEST. XXII.

(*Concluded.*)

Creditable Submission.

Submission to governors.—When the Jews were taken away to Babylon, there were four young men among the captives who were distinguished by their fidelity to the True God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. One of these is generally known in our days by his Hebrew name, and the other three are known by names given to them in Babylon. It is scarcely to be expected that you should recollect the names which the three originally had, nor that which the one received in Babylon. But these four young men were faithful to God. They would not do that which they were sure was wrong, nor would they partake of anything, however pleasant, by which

they might be led astray. Can you repeat the names by which these noble-minded four are generally known? Daniel; and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were, however, obedient to the King of Babylon and those whom he appointed over them. In all that was lawful and right they sought to please. In the learning of the Chaldees they excelled. (Daniel i.)

Submission to Pastors.—The Apostle Paul preached in the city of Ephesus and its neighbourhood for about three years. Then he left it, and preached at some distance, for a season. He found that he could not return. So he sent to tell the elders that he should like them to meet him at Miletus. He would sail near to that place. From Ephesus to Miletus was a great distance, perhaps about thirty miles. Yet these good men did not complain. They went to Miletus, and listened attentively to what the Apostle said to them, and evidently purposed to attend to his counsel. Afterwards they went with him to the sea-shore, where he had to embark, and wept at the parting. They showed that they loved St. Paul, that they delighted to hear him, and that they would be mindful of his words, even after his departure. (Acts xx. 17, 36—38.)

Exercises.—Ought we to commit sin to please any one? Ought we to be obedient to rulers? Whom ought we specially to respect as Christ's servants? Are ministers called ambassadors for Christ? What is an ambassador?

March 15.—Sect. VI., Quest. XXIII.

Use of the Law.

God's law our unerring guide.—A young man is mentioned in the New Testament who became a companion of the Apostle Paul, and a Christian preacher; and who, in early life, enjoyed the privilege of being instructed by a godly mother and a saintly grandmother. Two of the inspired Epistles were first addressed to him. What was the young man's name? What was the name of his mother? What was the name of Timothy's grandmother? (2 Tim. i. 5.) No doubt it would have been very pleasing to pay a visit to the house where Eunice, with the aged Lois, and the youthful Timothy, were all striving to serve God with loving hearts. We learn what writings were chiefly studied in that home. Timothy was there instructed in the Divine truth contained in the Old Testament. He was afterwards assured by St. Paul that the Book thus commended to him by his mother and grandmother was an infallible guide through the mazes of earth to the glorious blessedness of heaven. (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

God's law disclosing sinfulness.—Whilst Paul and Barnabas were companions in the work of preaching Christ they came to Lystra. In that city was a young man who had been lame from his infancy; so that he never had walked. The Apostle Paul saw him; and, by the power of Christ, healed the sufferer. (Acts xiv. 8—10.) The people, who saw the miracle, were so ignorant, that they at once concluded that the two strangers must be gods. They gave them names, and hurried to offer sacrifices to them. These people had never read the Bible: this was why they were thus so deplorably ignorant. They did many sinful actions without knowing the evil of them. They were as those who do not perceive filth around them, and on them, because of the darkness. God's Word is as a bright lamp. Paul preached that truth to them.

Exercises.—Can we judge aright without the Bible? Shall we hate sin if we neglect the Bible? Whose help must we ask, to understand the Bible aright? When we thus see our sinfulness, what must we do?

March 22.—Sect. VI., Quests. XXIV. and XXV.

The Evil of Sin.

The special heinousness of some sins.—What was the name of the man who betrayed the Lord Jesus? Men of all lands, and in every age, perceive that the sin of Judas Iscariot, in betraying the Saviour into the hands of His cruel enemies, was a crime of aggravated enormity. Hence the very name of Judas has become disagreeable to us. None of us would like to be named Judas. Once the name was, doubtless, regarded as desirable as James or John; but the awful crime perpetrated by that Judas who was surnamed "Iscariot" has stained it

for ever. There were many circumstances which rendered Iscariot's treachery specially detestable. Can you mention any of these? The incomparable goodness of Christ in Himself, and towards the ignorant, sinful and diseased.—The place occupied by Judas as a professed disciple of Jesus.—The cruelty and malice of those to whom Judas betrayed his Lord.—The manner in which he effected his purpose, saying, "Hail, Master," and kissing Him, whilst delivering Him into the hands of His deadly foes.

The incalculable evil of every sin.—The true blessedness of God's creatures, throughout the entire universe, can only be secured and maintained by attendance to God's commands. None of us can trace the mischief which will result from any act of disobedience, however slight that act may seem to be. In the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew we read a parable spoken by Jesus concerning a certain man who, being about to take a journey, entrusted some of his servants with money. Three of these are specially mentioned. To one five talents were lent; to another, two talents; and to the third, one talent. What was done with the five talents? with the two? with the one? Were the neglect and indolence of the servant who buried the one talent regarded by his Lord with indifference, or with displeasure?

Exercises.—Is murder a specially heinous crime? What other sins do you regard as specially evil? Is every sin offensive in the sight of God? Will any excuse avail if we wilfully transgress God's law? What must sinners do to be saved?

March 29.—Sect. VI., Quests. XXVI. and XXVII.

No Pardon by Law.

Sin is condemned by the law.—A young prince was, when a little child, in danger of being slain; but was rescued by a brave and kind-hearted uncle. He was carefully protected and nourished by his good uncle and aunt, until they succeeded in placing him on the throne of Judah, to which he was the rightful heir. What was the name of that prince? When Joash first became king, and so long as his good uncle, Jehoiada the priest, lived, he acted aright. After the death of his uncle, Joash, unhappily, yielded to temptation, and sinned against God. He went from bad to worse, until he became exceedingly vile and cruel. He was afterwards greatly afflicted; and, at length, some bad men murdered him in his bed. Though Joash had forsaken the Lord, it was very sinful for these assassins thus to take away the life of their King. The law of God condemned their crime. In which of the ten commandments is murder forbidden? (2 Chron. xxiv. 25, 26.)

Pardon is not provided by the law.—We cannot positively affirm what the murderers hoped to gain by their crime. The mother of one was a Moabitess, and the mother of the other an Ammonitess; so they were, to some extent, foreigners. By God's providence, the crown of Judah was still preserved in the family of David. Amaziah succeeded his father Joash. It appears that some time elapsed before he was fully established in the government. When he was firmly seated on the throne, he called to account those bad men who had murdered his father. Had the horrid deed occurred in some royal court where God's law was unknown, most likely the murderers' children would have also been put to death. This God's law forbade. But, unless some sufficient plea could be urged, the murderers themselves must die. There was no such plea, and so they were justly put to death. (2 Chron. xxv. 3, 4.)

Exercises.—Is the law of God perfect? Does it condemn all sin? Does it forbid anything which ought not to be forbidden? Does the law provide pardon! How would transgressors regard a law which provided pardon?

April 5.—Sect. VI., Quest. XXVIII.

Repentance cannot undo.

Without God's grace men will not repent.—Sinners may be greatly alarmed when they perceive how terrible and how near the consequences of their transgressions are. But, if God did not impart His Holy Spirit to them, they would never abhor the sin, or turn from it to God. What was the name of the King reigning in Egypt in the days of Moses? When the Lord commanded Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart,

did the King at once obey? How many plagues had God to send upon Egypt before the children of Israel were allowed to go? What was the first? What was the last? Can you mention any of the others? We can readily perceive that Pharaoh was much frightened. He was especially distressed by the death of the first-born in his own palace and in all the homes throughout Egypt. But did Pharaoh, even then, really repent? What evidence have we that he was only terrified and troubled, and not really penitent? How did he act when the terror had partly passed away?

No repentance can merit salvation.—We read concerning a certain King of Judah who began to repent when he was in a dungeon at Babylon. What was his name? Manasseh, it seems, was really penitent. He had, at length, allowed the Holy Spirit to soften his heart. The instructions given him by his good father, Hezekiah, would now be remembered. Manasseh prayed to God for mercy with all his heart and soul, and God was gracious unto him. But did the repentance of Manasseh in any way merit salvation? Even if he had henceforth loved God with all his strength, and every hour of his future life, was that any more than was due to God? If a tenant who owes the rent of past years, pays the future rent regularly, will that settle the arrears? Could Manasseh fully undo the mischief he had effected? Could he restore to life those whom he had unjustly slain? (2 Chron. xxxiii.)

Exercises.—Do bad men ever tremble when they see the consequences of their sins? Is that true repentance? Whose grace do we need in order that we may truly repent? Will true repentance atone for sin? By what means was salvation provided for sinners

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ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Chief-Justice Gascoigne.

Henry IV., among other occasions of sorrow, had to mourn over the folly and lawlessness of his eldest son, then known as Henry, Prince of Wales. Instead of assisting his father in the government of England, the young Prince associated with profligate men, and frequently joined them in deeds which were very discreditable. On one occasion some of Henry's companions had been arrested for misconduct, and were placed on their trial before Lord Chief-Justice Gascoigne. The Prince of Wales appeared in court, and stood near the prisoners during the trial, hoping to overawe the judge by showing thus publicly that the accused men were his friends. But the Chief-Justice proceeded just as he would have done if Henry had been absent. This so enraged the Prince of Wales, that he insulted the judge: it has, indeed, been affirmed that he struck Gascoigne. On this, the Chief-Justice ordered the officers to arrest the Prince. Many expected that Henry would resist, as he had many retainers and friends, and was the acknowledged heir to the throne. But it seems that the Prince at once perceived that he had done wrong, and quietly submitted to be led away to prison. Afterwards, when Henry had succeeded his father on the throne, Gascoigne expected to be rebuked, and deprived of his office. He had an audience with the young King, and apologised, explaining that what he did was from fidelity to the royal authority; as he, when seated on the bench, represented, for the time, the King himself. Henry frankly declared that Gascoigne had acted nobly, and confirmed him in his office. (No. II. *March* 8.)

Shusco, the Mystery-man.

Not far from Lake Huron, in North America, there lived a little boy, who was left without father or mother when he was but ten days old. When the boy, whose name was Shusco, was about fifteen years of age, his grandfather determined that he should be trained as a mystery-man. The grandfather blackened Shusco's face with coal, and the lad was required to go without any food for ten days. The only refreshment he had, during that time, was one cup of broth. This long fasting nearly ended in his death. He got over it, however. Still he thought that he had not yet been thoroughly made into a mystery-man; so he endured another period of fasting. He was now regarded as a very wonderful person. He went about deceiving the people, and leading a very wicked life, drinking to intoxication, and lying and cheating without restraint. Some Missionaries were preaching in the neighbourhood, and Shusco's wife went to hear them. She became a true Christian. Shusco was very unwilling to hear anything about sin or the Saviour. At length his wife's loving words prevailed. He declared, "I am sick at heart; I have spent all

my life sinning against God." The Divine law had disclosed the evil before unperceived. Shusco obtained mercy through Christ, and afterwards the law of God was his constant guide. (No. II. *March* 15.)

A Backslider's vain Boast.

At St. Christophers, as in many other islands of the West Indies, there are large numbers of negroes who enjoy the love of God in their hearts. They, like ourselves, have need to guard against temptation. The ungodly seek gratification in "the pleasures of sin," and strive to entice their neighbours to join them. One member of Society unhappily yielded, and had to be expelled from the Church of Christ. In his turn he became a tempter. Many strove to bring about the restoration of J. E——, for they still regarded him with good will. But all was in vain. Christmas was approaching, in the year 1852. To a pious friend J. E—— profanely affirmed, "I will have my sport out this Christmas." He was at work, one day, in the sugar-mill. Christmas had not arrived. His hand was caught in the machinery, and, in two minutes, he was torn to pieces. (No. II. *March* 22.)

The Laws of Tongatabu.

In the month of June, 1862, King George, of the Friendly Islands, and his principal chiefs, were assembled in their Parliament-house at Nukualofa, to accept and ratify a series of laws which had been previously prepared and discussed. It is a wonderful code of law, —in forty divisions. The whole might, in England, be published in a book so small as to be sold for a penny. Yet it seems as though nothing needful has been left out. The laws are wise and good. The King and chiefs were assisted by the Wesleyan Missionaries, who found them in a state of barbarism, but preached Christ's Gospel to them. To show how comprehensive these laws are, we quote one "concerning cocoa-nut trees." "If any one wish to cut down a cocoa-nut tree, he must first plant three cocoa-nuts, and then cut down the tree; but should he cut down the tree, and neglect to plant the nuts, he shall be fined five dollars." The laws are beneficial. But there is no declaration such as, "Whoever, after transgressing the law, affirms he is sorry, shall be forgiven." Had there been such an appendix, the legislation would not have done much to secure obedience. (No. II. *March* 29.)

A Burmese Robber.

Burmah is a country very far from England. There is, however, the same fallen human nature in Burmah as in this country; and, as the Gospel has not been long preached there, a larger proportion of the people are wicked. Robbers are very numerous. One of these was arrested by some officers of justice. He was taken before a judge; and, as his guilt was apparent, he was ordered to be put to death by crucifixion. The wretched man was suspended to a cross, to remain thereon until he died. A Christian Missionary passed that way, whose name was Carey. Mr. Carey was much pained to witness the agonies of the criminal, and thought such a punishment too severe. He therefore went to the governor, and begged that the unhappy sufferer might be released. At length Mr. Carey succeeded. The man was taken down, having been suspended from three o'clock in the afternoon until nine at night. You might well suppose that he would never rob anybody again. But the man did not seek the grace of God. So his evil heart speedily led him astray. He was, before long, in prison again for robbery. (No. II. *April* 5.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

March 8.—A Great Deed, and a Great Duty.

Mark v. 19: "Tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."

1. *The man possessed.*—A poor man was once possessed by evil spirits. Satan had got power over his body, as well as over his soul. He dwelt in a wild and desolate place by the sea-shore, where the dead were buried. Often his friends had taken him home, and had bound him "with fetters and chains;" but he had broken away again, and had gone back to the same place. None could tame him. Sometimes he cried out and cut himself with stones, and was always night and day among the tombs, so that all men feared to pass that way.

2. *The great things done.*—Jesus had come to the place where this poor man dwelt. The evil spirits at once knew the Lord, and were afraid at His

presence. But Jesus bade them come out of the man, and, in fear, at His voice they came forth; but prayed that He would suffer them to enter a herd of swine, feeding near the place. He did this, and the swine rushed down the steep hill-side, and perished in the sea. How real are the power and the malice of Satan! Soon, many came who saw him that had been possessed, "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind."

3. *A greater change.*—Do you fear as you hear of the sad state of this poor man? Are you glad of the change he met with? Do you know that we all need a change greater even than this? It is a *change of heart.* Those who sin are the subjects of Satan: they do his work, and are his *children.* Christ alone can deliver from this dreadful power of Satan. He will do this, and will give new tempers, and ways, and a new heart, if we pray to Him.

4. *The command.*—Jesus said to this man, "Go, and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." He did this, and "all men did marvel." They were full of wonder at the change. What would this declare respecting Him who had done it? His power and kindness. Have we anything to tell about Jesus? Has He done anything for us? Those whose hearts have been changed should ever be ready to tell to others how "the Lord has had compassion" on them.

REVISION.—What have we learnt about the man who was "possessed?" What about the power and malice of Satan? What is the great change which we all need? How may we get this change? What did the man do who was healed? What duty does our lesson teach us?

March 15.—A Goodly City, and the Dwellers there.

Ps. xv. 1: "Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?"

1. *The hill of Zion.*—This was one of the hills on which Jerusalem, the chief city of Israel, was built. There King David dwelt, and there he put "the ark of God." David loved this city greatly, and wished that all who lived there should be good. The beauty of Jerusalem, the many important things done there, and the great and good men who had lived there, made the Jews glad to think of their city; and they called it "the joy of the whole earth."

2. *The heavenly city.*—The Bible speaks of heaven as the "new Jerusalem." But its beauty and joy shall be greater than that of the city which David built. "No city on earth is so fair." No dweller there shall ever be sick or sad. There shall be no more sorrow nor death; for no sin is there. It is "the city of God and the Lamb." Is not this a good place in which to live for ever?

3. *The dwellers there.*—David, thinking of this, said, "Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" Then he tells who they shall be. Those who do right, who speak the truth, who are just and kind to those about them. None can do these things but such as fear the Lord. If we would live happy now, and dwell for ever after death in that goodly city, we must put away sin, and give our hearts to the Lord Jesus, who died for our salvation.

REVISION.—Where was the hill of Zion? What city was built on it? Why were the Jews so fond of Jerusalem? Of what other city did it make men think? Why is heaven a better place than Jerusalem? Who are those who dwell there? How may we prepare for heaven?

March 22.—The Child Restored.

MARK v. 41: "And He took the damsel by the hand."

1. *The anxious father.*—Jesus one day stood by the sea-shore. Many persons were there; some were busy at their work, others, in large numbers, gathered round Jesus and His disciples, when a man pressed earnestly through the crowd, and fell at His feet. He had come to beg Jesus to go home with him and heal his little daughter, who was very ill. This little girl had kind friends, and a pleasant home. Her father was "a ruler;" yet, though she had all that money and kindness could get her, she had fallen sick, and now lay at the point of death. Then the father, in his distress, *came to Jesus.* Will you learn to go to Jesus when in trouble? See, too, how this man prayed. He "besought Him earnestly," being *sure* that Jesus could do what he asked.

2. *The willing Saviour.*—Jesus was ready to comfort this father, and at once "went with him" *to save a little*

child. How full of love is the Saviour! No child is too young, or too feeble, or too poor, to be noticed and blessed by Him. As Jesus was on His way, the sad news came that the child was dead. Jesus knew how sorely this would grieve the sorrowing father, and in tender pity said to him, "Be not afraid, only believe." But was it not now too late to help? No; the power of Jesus is greater even than the power of death.

3. *Life from the dead.*—When they came to the house, many persons were there, some weeping, making a loud noise. But Jesus put them all forth, and took with Him into the silent chamber, where the dead child lay, only the father and mother, and three of His disciples. Then He took the cold and lifeless little hand in His, and said, "Damsel, arise!" At the voice of Jesus she at once arose, and sat up; and He gave her, a living child, into the hands of her mother. Children, then, may die. Some die very young. Yet *Jesus will raise the dead* at the last day. And He can now raise *dead souls* to life. When are *souls* dead? Will you go earnestly to Him for this life?

REVISION.—Why did the father come to Jesus? How did he ask for what he wanted? What may that teach us? Why did Jesus go? What did He do? What may we learn from this?

March 29.—The Sure Word.

Ps. xviii. 30: "The word of the Lord is tried."

1. *What it is to "try."*—When men wish to know the worth of a thing, they *try* it. There are various ways of doing this. Gold and silver are tried by being melted in a fire. In this way, too, they are freed from what is impure. If an engine is made, it is *tried*, that it may be seen how it will work. If a beam of wood, or iron, is to bear a heavy weight, it must first be tried, that its strength may be known. If it bear the test, we may afterwards *depend* on it. So men's words and actions are tried. If their promises are kept, and their truth and goodness are seen in time of trial, we may depend on them, and trust their word.

2. *The sure word of God.*—Men's words often fail; sometimes through deceit: often when they do not wish it, because they have not *power*, or they *forget*, or do not know *how*, to carry them out. It is not so with God. Did any word of His ever fail? No. Every promise has been kept, every threat has been fulfilled. He has all power, and all wisdom. There is no failure with Him; no words of His ever came to nought. Men have often tried to set them aside; but that cannot be. There is no king so strong, no man so wise, that he can do this.

3. *Trial should bring trust.*—A child depends on the word of his father; for he knows his goodness and strength. This is how we should trust in the Word of our Heavenly Father. Where is that Word? Yes, every word of God is sure. Are we in trouble? Let us trust in that sure Word of *power*. Are we in fear, through sin? Let us trust in His Word, which bringeth salvation.

REVISION.—What is it to *try* a thing? How is gold tried? How are men's words tried? Why do we know that the Word of God is sure? Why should we receive His Word? How may we trust it?

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

55. Which of the tribes of Israel had warriors specially skilled in the use of the left hand?

56. When the Israelites were numbered before entering Canaan, which of the tribes had the fewest families?

57. What Roman emperors are mentioned in the New Testament?

58. In 2 Cor. xii. 13, Paul tells the Corinthians he had not been "burdensome" to them. How did he get his living in Corinth?

59. Abraham lived thirty-five years after the marriage of Isaac. Prove this.

60. How "*many* days" are meant in Acts xiii. 31? H.

DAY-SCHOOL AFFAIRS AND WORK.

THE LATE PRINCIPAL OF THE NORMAL COLLEGE, WESTMINSTER.

The Rev. John Scott died at the house of his son-in-law, Mr. J. J. Lidgett, of Blackheath, on Friday, January 10th, 1868. Until within a week of his death he had been in his usual state of health, and on the Sunday previous he attended and took part in the service for the Renewal of the Covenant, in Blackheath Chapel. Next morning, symptoms of incipient paralysis appeared, which increased during Tuesday, and on Wednesday he sank into a state of unconsciousness, from which there was no recovery. After two days of slight suffering, he peacefully passed away to his rest, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-seventh of his ministry.

We have thus to chronicle an event which forms one of the heaviest bereavements that could befall the cause to which our pages are devoted.* For it Mr. Scott showed much more than an official zeal. With clear and intelligent foresight he discerned its great importance, felt what he discerned, and acted accordingly. To educational affairs,—while not withholding aid and counsel from other branches of Christian service,—he for many years devoted labours which, for practical wisdom, loving diligence, and hallowed influence, can scarcely be over-estimated. We will not now attempt to supply biographical records; these, in due time, will be forthcoming.

The remains of Mr. Scott were interred in the Norwood Cemetery, on Friday, January 17th, in a vault very near to that of the late invaluable Secretary of the Education Committee, the Rev. M. C. Taylor. A previous service was conducted in the Blackheath Methodist Chapel, by the Revds. J. Harvard; the President of the Conference, (Rev. J. Bedford;) W. Arthur, M.A.; and Dr. Osborn, who delivered an address, in which he sketched the character and course of his deceased friend. We select and append a brief extract, which specially refers to Mr. Scott's services in connexion with Methodist Education.

"It was during his year of office, (as President of the Conference,) that the discussions caused by the proposal of a Government-plan of Education in 1839, and particularly by the subsequent introduction and withdrawal of the Factories Education Bill, awakened the sentiment that our Connexion was bound to take some more decided and active part in the promotion of primary education among the poor than it had ever before done. To foster that sentiment, to develop it, and to embody it in action, was to be henceforth the principal, though by no means the only, employment of his remaining years. It was to this that he was providentially led, in his first year of presidency; and, as time presented new spheres of active effort in connexion with this subject, as Chairman of the General Education Committee, and Principal of the Seminary, the same

* Our February Number had already been some days in type, when Mr. Scott's decease occurred.—Ed.

Providence led him successively to fill them with equal honour to himself and advantage to the cause of God. His firm adherence to principle, his comprehensive grasp of details, his calm judgment, his conciliatory temper, his practical sagacity, his kindness for the young, his unwearied diligence, became more and more conspicuous; and, by God's blessing upon the efforts which he, for the most part, prompted and guided, we have now a General Education Fund, a widely-ramified day-school system, and a Normal Training Institution for teachers, which it would be superfluous to speak of further to this audience. In these things he will be found to have erected his best monument; and, being dead, will speak in many voices to the next generation. His history, in connexion with our educational movements, will confirm the truth of that memorable sentence which the apostle of the Indians inscribed on his first grammar: "Prayer and pains through faith in Jesus Christ will do *any*thing."

ROOT AND FRUIT.

Sir J. Kay-Shuttleworth, in an interesting letter to the old scholars of the Bamford Sunday-school, says, that in it, forty-five years ago, he "received the first impulse to observe, inquire, and ponder on the methods and discipline of schools for the people." After giving reminiscences of some of his early fellow-labourers, and stating that Mr. John Ashworth, of Rochdale, (well known by his tracts, entitled "Strange Tales,") was one of his scholars in the above-named school, he adds:—

"You ought to rejoice, as I do, that your Sunday-school has produced such a man. I would not have you, however, think that the Sunday-school can do all that is needed in the instruction and training of youth. The Sunday-school was the root from which sprang our system of day-schools. The force which makes religious training the chief aim of the elementary day-school was derived from this root. The congregational organisation of our school-system had the same origin. Long before even enlightened statesmen, and leaders of public opinion, cared for the education of the people, the congregation had begun the work in the Sunday-school. When the Government first attempted to organise national education, it not only found this machinery ready to its hand; but it also, after various experiments in other directions, found that the Churches and congregations contained within themselves a zeal and purpose, as to public education, which existed in no civic body, not even in the Parliament itself. Even now, when great political changes have made the education of the people a necessity of the State, I cannot conceive that any purely civic body, like a committee of ratepayers, or a town-council, can, in the present state of information, opinion, and feeling, without mischief, supersede the congregation in the management of the school. On the other hand, the congregational school will have to become a public school, in which the civil rights of the minority, however small and humble, will have to be respected. On this basis the schools, which have sprung from the root of the Sunday-school, and retain both the original aim of religious training and the congregational organisation, may well be included in a national system, supported both by the general taxation and by local rates. . . . The Sunday-school will be regarded more and more as a part of the religious organisation of the congregation. The day-school will, I hope, always retain the object of bringing up our youth religiously; but it will also be adapted to the political wants of the State, and to the civil rights of the minority. We do not make revolutions in England, but our institutions grow and spread like our oaks. So this school-system, which has had a congregational origin, will grow, change, and spread, until it is national."

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

The Foundation-Stone of the "Prince Alfred" Methodist College, South-Australia; laid by H.R.H. The DUKE of EDINBURGH.

THE object of this Institution is to impart a good sound education to the sons, not only of members of the Wesleyan Denomination, but to all others who may become pupils. The idea of erecting it was first mooted in 1854, when the late D. J. Draper was Chairman of the Adelaide District. In 1865, thirteen acres of land were purchased in Kent Town, Adelaide, South-Australia, for £2,750, no funds having been subscribed at the time. At a breakfast-meeting in 1866, the sum of £2,720 was contributed or promised; an amount since raised to £4,000.

The first tidings of the contemplated visit of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh to the colony suggested to those having the management of matters the desirability of requesting him to lay the foundation-stone and of allowing the college to be so named, that it should be a lasting memorial of his presence in South-Australia. His Excellency, on being communicated with, assented, so far as he was able, to the proposal, and his Royal Highness, on being appealed to, willingly ratified that assent. The ceremony took place on Tuesday, November 5th, and the particulars are given in the *South-Australian Register* of November 28th.

The decorations were very elaborate and effective. The trowel, which was a beautiful specimen of handiwork, was of gold, and the border round the edge of the blade was composed of delicately engraved fern-leaves, with the Sturt-pea at intervals. The base of the blade was ornamented with the rose, shamrock, and thistle springing from the root of the handle, which was also ornamented with frosted work. The inscription it bore was:—"Presented to H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., on his laying the foundation-stone of Prince Alfred College, in connexion with the Wesleyan-Methodist Church, South Australia, November 5th, 1867." The level had been elegantly carved out of Huon pine, by Mr. B. Hall, of Rundle-street, from a design by Mr. Garlick. The beam, about nine inches in length, contained the crest and initials of his Royal Highness, and the British lion couchant at the ends. Each side of the shaft displayed a cornucopia, a dolphin, and the flag of Edinburgh, with the Union-Jack lying across the beam. Two anchors, with cables and tackle, were also carved on the shaft, which was surmounted by the shamrock, rose, and thistle, surrounding the Prince's coronet. The plummet was of gold, suspended by a silken thread. The stone itself was a fine block of Macclesfield marble, weighing one and a quarter tons. The front of it was encircled by a carved border, four and a half inches wide, and upon the face, within the border, were inscribed the following words:—"This stone was laid by his Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., on the fifth day of November, MDCCCLXVII." The entire block was elevated a few inches above its bed, and all the necessary tackle for lowering it was in readiness. Standing or sitting near the stone, were a number of Ministers of the Wesleyan-Methodist body, including the Rev. J. Watsford, Chairman of the District, and the Revs. J. G. Millard and A. Rigg, of the First Adelaide Circuit.

Soon after two o'clock his ROYAL HIGHNESS arrived at the College-grounds, preceded by a small escort of cavalry, and accompanied by his Excellency the GOVERNOR, and others. After singing, prayer, and the reading of portions of Scripture, the REV. J. WATSFORD approached his Royal Highness, who stood throughout the entire ceremony, and read the subjoined address:—

"*To his Royal Highness the* DUKE OF EDINBURGH, K.G., *&c., &c.*

"May it please your Royal Highness,—

"We, the Committee appointed by the Australian Conference of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church to conduct its educational affairs in South-Australia, beg leave to present our hearty congratulations to your Royal Highness on your safe arrival in Australia.

"Rejoicing as we do, with all her Majesty's subjects, on this occasion, we have embraced the opportunity of very respectfully inviting your Royal Highness to lay the foundation-stone of a College where a sound and superior education will be imparted, both to the sons of the members of the Wesleyan Church, and to all who may desire to avail themselves of its advantages.

"We humbly pray that your Royal Highness will be pleased to allow us to name this Institution 'Prince Alfred College,' and thus add another to the many lasting memorials of your Royal Highness's visit to this province.

"We respectfully request your Royal Highness, in laying the foundation-stone, to accept the trowel, which we here present for that purpose.

"Praying that your Royal Highness may receive every blessing of Providence and grace on earth, and at last obtain a crown of life that fadeth not away,—

"We are your Royal Highness's most humble servants,

"On behalf of the Committee,

"JOHN WATSFORD, Chairman.
"G. W. COTTON, Hon. Sec.

"*Adelaide, November 5th*, 1867."

His Royal Highness replied :—

"GENTLEMEN, — I have great pleasure in receiving your invitation to lay the foundation-stone of this College, which has so noble an object as a sound education, as well for the sons of the Wesleyan Church as of other denominations.

"It gives me great pleasure to accede to the request you have made that this Institution should be named after me, and the trowel which you have so kindly presented to me will ever remind me of this most eventful day.

"May Almighty God grant His blessing on this Institution and the purpose for which it is intended.

"ALFRED.

"*To the Chairman and Committee of the Wesleyan - Methodist Church, South-Australia.*"

Mr. T. G. WATERHOUSE, the Treasurer of the College Building-Fund, presented the trowel to his Royal Highness; and after it had been used in spreading the mortar, the marble block was gradually let down into its position, the Prince himself assisting in steadying it during its descent. The mallet and level, which were presented by Mr. J. Coulton, M.P., and Mr. G. W. Cotton, were then respectively applied, and his Royal Highness completed the operation by repeating the words, "I declare this stone to be well and truly laid."

A loud outburst of cheers for the Prince was followed by another round for the Governor; and then by a most hearty one for her Majesty the QUEEN.

The Manchester Conference on Education.

THIS was a Conference to which persons favourable to the extension of National Education by Local Rating were invited; the scheme to be discussed being one which was not intended to supersede the present Denominational system. It was largely attended. Mr. Bruce, M.P., and Mr. Forster, M.P., were elected presidents. Opinion was invited on the following questions :—

"1. The relative advantages of a permissive bill, and one based on compulsory rating. 2. If the bill be based on compulsory rating, would it be desirable to make it applicable at once to the whole country, or applicable only by order in Council on the report of her Majesty's school-inspectors? 3. Is there anything peculiar in the condition of rural parishes which renders it needful to make special regulations on their behalf, or to exempt them from the operations of the bill? 4. To what extent is it desirable to modify the Minutes of Council so as to include purely secular schools?"

The discussions of the first day resulted in an almost unanimous decision in favour of a measure which, in the first instance, would permit localities to levy rates for the establishment of schools in needy districts; and, in default of a refusal to do so, would empower the State to step in, and compel the provision. On the second day there was an equally strong feeling in favour of further measures to compel the attendance of children at some school. The following resolutions were adopted :—

"That this Conference requests the Right Hon. H. A. Bruce, the Hon. W. E. Forster, and the Hon. Algernon Egerton either to re-introduce the bill of last Session, with such modifications as may be deemed desirable, in conference with the Education Bill Committee, to render it more complete, or to lend their support to any Government measure based on similar principles.

"That the Education Bill Committee be requested, in conjunction with Mr. Bazley, to prepare such clauses as they may consider practicable, to enforce the attendance at school of neglected children, and to request him to give notice, before any education-bill brought into Parliament comes to a second reading, that he will introduce such clauses in Committee."

Dewsbury Wesleyan Literary Society.

THE annual meeting of the above was held on Wednesday evening, January 8th, in the new, handsome, and commodious Wesleyan Sunday-school. The Mayor of Dewsbury, C. R. Scholes, Esq., in the chair. About three hundred sat down to tea. After devotional exercises, the Chairman said that all such Societies had his sympathy. As chief magistrate of the borough, he had noticed that a very large proportion of those who came before him were in a state of lamentable ignorance.

Mr. J. R. Robinson, Hon. Secretary, read the Report; from which it appeared that thirty-three years had elapsed since the formation of the Society. Lectures had been delivered by the Rev. R. S. Hardy, Hon. Mem. R.A.S., on "Jerusalem; as it was, and as it is." The Rev. J. M. Bamford, on "Calvin, and the Reformation in Geneva." The Rev. J. Finch, on "The Countess of Huntingdon; her Times and her Contemporaries." Rev. R. S. Hardy, on "Abyssinia:" and the Rev. J. W. Close, on "The Bible." The library has 1,272 volumes. The receipts, during the year, had been £37 2*s.* 8½*d.*, and the expenses, £34 15*s.* 7*d.*

The Rev. J. Henshall spoke of the inestimable value to young men of access to

such a library. God had endowed man with mind; but it must be improved. It was a mine of precious treasures, dormant until diligently worked by the miner. He advised them to take care of their bodies, and quoted Coleridge's saying, "Youthful excesses are bills drawn on maturer age, payable with tremendous interest." He bade them be careful to avoid all beginnings of evil, and to take care of time; saying that a Chancellor of France read through a large volume in the few minutes each day spent in waiting for dinner, and in our own metropolis a young man mastered the History of England whilst waiting for his dinners. He also urged them to be careful what they read, and to remember the four classes of readers; the first of which was likened by Coleridge to the hour-glass, which allows every grain of sand to run through without retaining anything; the second to a sponge, which took up clean water, returning it a little dirtier; the third was like a jelly-bag, which retains all the bad, and lets the good escape; whilst the fourth was like the miner, who, carefully rejecting what is worthless, fills his hand with gold and precious gems.

The Rev. Sampson Cocks said that, while Christianity holds all earthly things lightly, in comparison with heavenly things, it contemplates man's material well-being, as well as his spiritual welfare. Never let it be said that Christianity is inimical to science, art, inquiry, intelligence: to talk of Christianity favouring ignorance, is a great mistake. Its brightest ornaments have been men of greatest culture; and where unlettered men have adorned it, it has been felt that culture would have added to their influence and lustre. A Christian cannot know too much.

The Rev. Jacob Morton, F.R.A.S., said that the Hon. Secretary of the Institute had furnished him with a catalogue of the contents of the library; and, in order that he might arrive at a thorough knowledge of its contents, he had read it carefully through three times, and had not found in it, judging from the *titles* of the volumes, one which he would object to place before his wife, his sister, or his daughter; which, in these days of pernicious literature, was saying a great deal. They had the most valuable books on almost every subject, — theology, science, art, history, travels, biography; and it seemed that the committee kept abreast with the times. If the young men of the Society made good use of the great privileges placed within their reach, they would have more sterling knowledge than Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle. After a brief speech by the Rev. William Exley, Superintendent of the Circuit, and President of the Institution, the audience dispersed, having spent about five hours in a most agreeable manner. J. R. R.

Liverpool: Brunswick Wesleyan-Methodist Sunday-School.

The annual meeting of teachers and friends was held in the school-rooms, Erskine-street, on Thursday evening, January 16th, 1868, when about 230 sat down to tea. After tea the chair was taken by Mr. John Lloyd Jones, the senior Superintendent. Mr. Carmichael (the Secretary) read the report; from which it appeared that the average morning-attendance, in the boys' and girls' schools, was 96; and of the boys, girls, and infants, in the afternoon, 442; being an increase of 35. School prayer-meetings, agreed upon in August, 1867, were held at half-past six, A.M., and in the evening. An average of 55 scholars, besides teachers, &c., were present: some of the scholars found peace with God. One of the Superintendents (Mr. Warriner) had visited a scholar prostrated by a painful affliction, who gave clear evidence of conversion; and who exclaimed, "I am thankful I ever attended the Sunday-school, and was told about Jesus; for now I feel He comforts me." Reference was also made in the Report to the incident related in the "School Sketches," given in the January number of this periodical. The issues from the library, during the year, had been 3,868 volumes, to 231 readers. Efforts were in progress to furnish it with a larger supply of suitable books for juvenile reading. The sum collected for Missions showed an increase. The Revs. S. W. Christophers, James Clapham, and J. Wevill; with Messrs. Read, Edkins, Warriner, Kelly, and Scott, addressed the meeting.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

MARY JANE HENSHALL.

Mary Jane Henshall was born at Tintwistle, in Cheshire, in the year 1852. The fear of the Lord was before her eyes from early childhood. She was obedient to her parents, kind to all around her, and employed her leisure-moments in committing to memory passages of Scripture,

and many of our hymns; some of which she was accustomed to recite in Sunday-school when only seven years of age. When about twelve years old, conversational classes having been established in connexion with Hadfield Sunday-school, Mary Jane, who for two or three years had sorrowed on account of sin, became a member of a class; and continued to be so until the removal of her parents to Dewsbury. Though not connected with a class at her new place of residence, she still loved the Sabbath-school, and all connected with it. Her last attendance was on Sunday, February 10th, 1867. On the succeeding Wednesday she left her work, being unable to continue at it any longer. She gradually became weaker, until the Sunday following, when her reason left her. At times, however, consciousness returned. She mourned,—not for herself, but for her sorrowing parents, on whose account she felt much. A favourite hymn was frequently on her lips,—

"I want to be an angel,
And with the angels stand,
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand:
There, right before my Saviour,
So glorious, and so bright,
I'll sing the sweetest music,
And praise Him day and night."

At times she prayed fervently that it might please God to take away the bitter cup, for her family's sake; but she resignedly added, "Thy will be done." On other occasions she would break out with—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O! Lamb of God, I come."

The Lord's prayer was frequently offered up by her, and closed with a fervent and repeated "Amen! Amen!" Gradually her strength left her, her voice became more and more inaudible; but her lips still moved, as if in prayer, though no sound could be heard. Her sufferings ceased on Wednesday, February 20th, 1867.

She "was not;" for God had taken her to Himself, that where He is, she might be for ever.

"For ever! what a volume lies
Within those simple words alone:
How we regret, how dearly prize,
What once was trifling in our eyes,
When 'tis for ever gone."

Teachers and scholars! let us so live, that when our time of departure arrives, knowing "in whom we have believed," we may resign our spirit into His hands; and so meet our last enemy without doubt or fear, and "in sure and certain hope" of a glorious resurrection.

J. R. R.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

Hid Treasures, and the Search for them. By JOHN HARTLEY. Pp. 267. Third Edition. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.—We are glad to see another, and so neatly got-up, edition of this book, which contains "the substance of lectures delivered to Bible-classes." Instructers of such young people as are usually found in these, and in the higher classes of our Sunday-schools, will meet with much in this volume to enlarge their own acquaintance with the meaning and lessons of Scripture, and to assist them in their work.

The Rocket; or, the Story of the Stephensons, Father and Son. A Book for Boys. By H. C. KNIGHT. Pp. 116. London and Edinburgh: Nelson and Sons.—The general contents of this book are sufficiently indicated by its title. The spirit in which it is written will appear from the following extract from its preface: "A brief book for the boys. God gives you work to do in the world. He gives you honourable work. There is much done that is mean and dishonourable. Depend upon it *that* is not His. This little book will show you how much the practice of the virtues, the humble virtues, has to do with making good work. But keep ever in mind that these virtues, however useful and important for your work in this world, have no

saving power in them; they form no plea for the favour of God." The story could scarcely be better told to young listeners.

The Story of the White Rock Cove. Pp. 224. London and Edinburgh: Nelson and Sons.—Will leave any boys who may read it vividly impressed with the wickedness and hurtfulness of envy, and the excellence of kindness.

Joy and Praise on Jordan's Brink. By JOHN DWYER. Pp. 34.—*The Light in the Window.* Pp. 34. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.—Two new Reward-Books. The *first* is a sketch of the last days of W. G. Hewitt, of Holywood, near Belfast, and shows how genuine and advanced the piety of a youth may, by Divine grace, become; and how blessedly such a disciple may pass away to the Master.—The *second* is a most touching village-story "for mothers and sons." It is just such a little book as one might be glad to have at hand to give to a prodigal,—in the hope that its narrative would touch his heart; or to a mother, by way of encouraging her to pray and labour with all patience and wisdom for the salvation of rebellious children.

Biblical Helps for English Readers. No. I. *The English Bible, how to Read and Study it.* No. II. *The Symbolic and Figurative Language of the Bible.* By W. CARPENTER. Pp. 107. London: Heywood and Co.—Contain much useful advice and information, given in a small compass, and in a cheap form.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

The Angel and the Hermit.

A HERMIT was conducted by an angel into a wood, where he saw an old man cutting down boughs to make up a burden. When it was large, he tied it up, and attempted to lift it on his shoulders and carry it away; but, finding it very heavy, he laid it down again, cut more wood, and heaped it on, and then tried again to carry it off. This he repeated several times, always adding something to the load, after trying in vain to raise it from the ground.

In the mean time, the hermit, astonished at the old man's folly, desired the angel to explain what this meant. "You behold," said he, "in this foolish old man, an exact representation of those who, being made sensible of the burden of their sins, resolve to repent; but soon grow weary, and, instead of lessening their burden, increase it every day. At each trial they find the task heavier than it was before, and so put it off a little longer, in the vain hope that they will by-and-by be more able to accomplish it. Thus they go on adding to their burden, till it grows too heavy to be borne; and then, in despair of God's mercy, and with their sins unrepented of, they lie down and die. Turn again, my son, and behold the end of the old man, whom thou sawest heaping up a load of boughs."

The hermit looked, and saw him in vain attempting to remove the pile, which was now accumulated far beyond his strength to raise. His feeble limbs tottered over their burden; the poor remains of his strength were fast ebbing away; the darkness of death was gathering around him; and, after a convulsive and impotent attempt to lift the pile, he fell down and expired.—*Christian Treasury.*

"Let your Light shine."

JESUS bids us shine
With a pure, clear light,
Like a little candle
Burning in the night.
In the world is darkness;
So we must shine—
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine,
First of all, for Him:
Well He sees and knows it,
If our light is dim.
He looks down from heaven,
To see us shine—
You in your small corner,
And me in mine.

Jesus bids us shine,
Then, for all around;
For many kinds of darkness
In the world are found:
There's sin, and want, and sorrow;
So we must shine—
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

MARCH 1.—Morning Lesson.

THE GOD OF JUDGMENT PRAISED.—Psalm ix.

Summary.—The inscription here is, "To the chief musician upon Muth-labben," or, according to some, "Muth-nabal." *Muth*, is "death," and *nabal*, "a fool." This makes the title mean, "the death of the fool;" which agrees with the Psalm. There is, however, scarcely any agreement among learned men as to the meaning of "Muth-labben."

I. Enemies Judged.—V. 1—6. *With my whole heart.*—Not merely with the lips, like some; nor with a divided heart, like others. *Marvellous works*,—miraculous deliverances. *When mine enemies*, &c.—This was sure to come to pass; for God, who had humbled so many of David's enemies, would continue to help him. *Thou hast maintained*, &c.—His *cause* being just, he attributed his triumph to the God of judgment. *Hast rebuked*, &c.—God's rebukes always include the infliction of punishment. *O thou enemy*, &c.—The *destruction* of the enemy here meant was so complete, that there was nothing more to destroy. *Their memorial*, &c.—The Amalekites are probably intended. After David's victories over them, they disappear from history. Compare Exod. xvii. 14; Num. xxiv. 20; Deut. xxv. 19.

II. The God of Judgment.—V. 7—12. *But the Lord*, &c.—His throne is established for the purpose of administering righteous judgment, and no one can depose Him from it. *They that know*, &c.—To *know* Him is to trust Him. *Which dwelleth in Zion*,—i.e., whose visible presence rested above the ark in the tabernacle which was in Zion. *Inquisition*,—inquiry. *For blood*,—unrighteously shed. *He remembereth them*,—and will be their terrible Avenger. Compare Gen. iv. 9, 10; Heb. xii. 24; Rev. vi. 10.

III. Coming Judgments.—V. 13—20. *Have mercy upon me.*—David had yet other enemies, against whom he needed the help of the righteous Judge; and for that help he prays. *Thou that liftest me up*,—i.e., that hast so often done so. *The gates of death*,—i.e., situations in which his life was in extreme peril. *In the gates of the daughter of Zion*,—i.e., in the places of public resort in Jerusalem. The city is poetically personified as a maiden, or daughter. *The heathen*, &c.—David's enemies were always the aggressors; and in every case the mischief designed for him fell back upon themselves. *In the pit—in the net.*—These metaphors are taken from wild-beast-hunting and bird-catching. David's faith sees all his enemies already overcome. *The Lord is known*, &c.—When His judgments are abroad in the earth, men see that there is One who judges. *Shall be turned into hell.*—This will be the last act of the God of judgment in regard to them. *Shall not alway be forgotten.*—They NEVER are, (v. 12,) though they sometimes seem to be. *But men*,—who cannot contend with God.

Higgaion, v. 16,—is supposed to be a direction to the singers of this Psalm, in the tabernacle-service, to pause, for silent meditation; and *Selah* was, probably, also a musical sign. On the meaning of the latter word, however, the learned are hopelessly at variance.

Reflections.—1. *God should be praised for His mercies.*—The Giver will be more disposed to confer new gifts when He sees that what He has already given is prized.

2. *The more God is known, the more He is reverenced.*—If we know Him, we must reverence Him, who commands so many judgments.

3. *The more God is known, the more He is loved.*—They who know Him can trust Him for everything, v. 10. If we cannot trust Him, we do not know Him: how good, and gracious, and ready to help He is.

4. *The more mercy we receive, the more*

we feel our need.—With us, as with David, "I will praise Thee," must ever be followed by, "Have mercy upon me!"

5. *The sinner is his own worst enemy.*—See v. 15, 16. The drunkard kills himself; the prodigal beggars himself; the quarrelsome involve themselves; and all sinners "treasure" up for themselves "wrath against the day of wrath."

6. *Remember what you are.*—You cannot withstand God; you must die; you must live again somewhere. Where?

QUESTIONS.—What does God do on His throne? How had He "rebuked" David's enemies? What will follow from "knowing" Him? How did He "dwell in Zion?" For what does He make inquiry? When did He do so? How is the sinner his own enemy?

Illustration.—PITFALLS.

See v. 15. The ordinary mode of killing the larger animals in Southern Africa is this: "The 'hopo' consists of two hedges in form of the letter V. Instead of the hedges joining at the angle, they form a lane about fifty yards long, at the extremity of which a pit is dug, and carefully covered with short green rushes. The herds are driven with shouts into the narrow part of the 'hopo,' when men secreted there throw their javelins among them; and on the affrighted animals rush to the opening at the end, and fall into the pit, till it is full."—*Dr. Livingstone.*

MARCH 1.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE KINGDOM AND THE KING.—Mark iv. 21—41.

For repetition, verses 39—41.

SUMMARY.—Our Lord shows that they who have the truth must make it known; likens His kingdom to growing corn, and a grain of mustard-seed; and stills a storm.

I. WHAT CANDLES ARE FOR.—V. 21—25. These verses refer to the parable given above. *A candle put under a bushel*—would be perfectly useless; but *set on a candlestick*, it gives light to the house, Matt. v. 15. Our Lord's teaching was not intended to hide the truth, but to make it known. Though He had explained the previous parable to the twelve privately, (v. 10,) they were to cause it to *come abroad*, by proclaiming what He had taught them, Matt. x. 27. *Let him hear*,—attentively, for, else, how can he *tell?* He must take in before he can give out. *Take heed*, &c.,—or, consider well what ye hear; for mere hearing is not enough. *With what measure*, &c.—According to their attention would be the knowledge communicated to them. *He that hath*, &c.—The sense is, that only they who improve what they learn, can become more wise.

II. HOW GRAIN GROWS.—V. 26—29. *Sleep and rise.*—Acting as all men do, without interfering with the growth of the grain. Having done his part, he leaves the rest to nature, and nature's God. *He knoweth not how*,—nor can all the philosophers tell him. The nourishment and growth of piety is equally mysterious. *Of herself*,—without the help of man. He can sow the seed, but he cannot make it grow. So, man can preach the Gospel, but he cannot cause it to take effect. *First the blade*, &c.—Grace in the heart gradually reaches perfection, as grain does.

III. HOW A SMALL SEED BECOMES A GREAT TREE.—V. 30—34. *Like a grain of mustard-seed.*—Grace may begin in one feeble good desire; but it thence expands, till "all thoughts, all passions, all delights," find shelter under it. *Less than all the seeds*,—that is, than all *tree*-producing seeds. Or, perhaps, the "mustard-seed" is only mentioned as a well-known Jewish figure for anything very small.

IV. HOW JESUS STILLED A STORM.—V. 35—41. Having described "the kingdom," the Evangelist here narrates an act of "the King," which shows that His dominion includes the realm of nature. *Even as He was*,—without preparation or refreshment. *Other little ships*,—which were doubtless separated from *Him* by the gale. *Why are ye so fearful?*—Having HIM with them, they should not have been afraid.

REFLECTIONS.—1. "*He that hath, to him shall be given.*"—God delights to

heap benefits upon those who use them wisely; but He takes them back from such as neglect their duty.

2. "*Take heed what ye hear.*"—Consider it well. Apply it faithfully. *You* are the soil to which your teachers bring the precious seed. If both the soil and the seed be good, there is sure to be a harvest.

3. *Religion is not of earth.*—"The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself," but not unless "seed" is put into it. Grace comes down from heaven, and is the gift of God. It must be put into the heart, or there never can be a holy life produced. What, then, is the condition of the field? Is it broken up? Is it cleared of thorns and rubbish? Is the seed put in? Is it taking root in feelings of godly sorrow, or springing up in holy desires and purposes?

4. *Despise not "the day of small things."*—To begin great, and end little, is the way of the world. Far better to begin little, and end great. This is the way to triumph. God's great things have always had small beginnings. The oak, the king of trees, begins with a tiny acorn. The luxuriant Oriental mustard-plant begins with a seed so small that one can scarcely seize it with his fingers. The Christian Church, throughout all the world, began with a little Babe at Bethlehem. The life of grace, which leads to the life of glory, begins with the childlike trust of a broken and contrite heart.

5. *Though grace begins small, it must not continue small.*—"Faith, as a grain of mustard-seed," (Matt. xvii. 20,) must be a faith that grows. It will have many hindrances; but the life which is in the seed will show itself in the growth of the plant.

QUESTIONS.—What is a candle for? How is religious knowledge like a candle? What was "hidden" with the Apostles? for what purpose? Who is "he that hath?" "he that hath not?" How does grain grow? What does this teach? What does the parable of the mustard-seed teach? What happened on the sea?

Illustrations.—I. MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

See v. 24. "The Hindoo proverb on this subject is, *Tan tan seythu vinne tanuku;* that is, 'What he himself has done, shall be done to him again.' Thus, a man having acted kindly towards another, will receive a similar favour from others."—*Roberts.*

II. THE MUSTARD-PLANT.

See v. 31, 32. Travellers tell us of one mustard-plant that was ten feet high; of another that covered a potter's tent; and of a third that was so tall, that the traveller "rode on horseback under it, without incurring the fate of Absalom."—*See Trench.*

MARCH 8.—MORNING LESSON.

PHARAOH'S DEFIANCE AND CRUELTY.—Exodus v.

SUMMARY.—Moses and Aaron request that the Israelites may journey into the desert, that they may worship God. Pharaoh refuses their request, and imposes heavier tasks upon the Hebrews. They complain to Pharaoh, but get no relief. They bring their complaint to Moses, who lays it before God.

I. THE REQUEST REFUSED.—V. 1.—5. *A feast,*—i.e., a festival in honour of their *God.* The animals they would sacrifice were worshipped by the Egyptians; and hence the *feast* was to be *in the wilderness.* From the weak condition of the Israelites, the heathen King probably concluded that *the* LORD Himself was weak. Had they been powerful and prosperous, he would, doubtless, have spoken more reverently of their God. Moses and Aaron intimate that, however Pharaoh might defy Jehovah, *they* dared not disobey Him. The King regards their request as the plea of idleness; and charges them with designing to rob the State by keeping so many slaves *from their works.* *Let* means "hinder."

II. FRESH OPPRESSION.—V. 6—9. *Taskmasters,*—Egyptian bailiffs, general managers of the work. *Their officers,*—Israelites, selected by the taskmasters to act as over-lookers. Affecting to regard their request as the excuse of idlers, and really suspecting that it was prompted by a desire for freedom, (ch. i. 9, 10,) Pharaoh instructed his bailiffs

to give them *no more straw*, but to make them gather it for themselves, and yet require them to produce as many *bricks* as before. Chopped straw was mixed with the clay of which the bricks were made. *Tale* means "number."

III. An "Evil Case."—V. 10—14. Before the fresh oppression, the strength of the Israelites was taxed to the uttermost; and to make as many bricks as ever, and yet go *throughout all the land* gathering *stubble instead of straw*, was impossible. The beating of the Hebrew "officers" by the royal taskmasters was, therefore, an act of very gross cruelty.

IV. A Vain Remonstrance.—V. 15—18. The over-lookers appeal to Pharaoh against the officers he had set over them; but Pharaoh was a tyrant in whose bosom mercy found no place, so he dismisses them with taunts as cruel as the lashes of his underlings.

V. Broken Spirits.—V. 19—23. *Moses and Aaron stood in the way*,—waiting to learn what success the *officers* had met with. The latter had given way to despair, and they accosted their leaders with an imprecation as unjust as it was bitter. They attribute all their misery to them, and pray that *the* Lord would *judge*,—i.e., "punish," them. Moses makes no reply. He knew how *evil* was their *case*, and made allowance for their bitter words. He brings the matter before the Lord; but his words appear to show that *his* faith, also, was almost overcome by the difficulties of the situation.

Reflections.—1. *There is danger in neglecting public worship.*—It is at our peril that we withhold what God asks for. "Pestilence" and "the sword" are only two of the many means by which He can punish those who forget Him.

2. *Well-doing has often been accounted ill-doing.*—The overworked Hebrews were called "idle" by King Pharaoh; and Moses and Aaron were accused of encouraging them in idleness. Concern about the soul has often been attributed to indifference to the claims of this life.

3. *Unreasonableness brings its own punishment.*—Pharaoh would not give the Israelites "straw," but had afterwards to give "jewels," ch. xii. 35, 36.

4. *Prayer is the surest refuge for the helpless.*—When you cannot understand God's dealings, fly to Him in prayer.

Questions.—What did Moses mean by "holding a feast?" What answer did Pharaoh give? Why did Moses press his request? Of what did Pharaoh accuse him and Aaron? What fresh oppression did he exercise? Who next waited upon him? why? with what result? Of what did they then complain? What did Moses do?

Illustration.—straw for brick-making.

See v. 7. "The use of crude bricks baked in the sun was universal throughout the country, and the dry climate of Egypt was peculiarly suited to these simple materials. They had the recommendation of cheapness, and even of durability; and those made three thousand years ago, whether with or without straw, are even now as firm and fit for use as when first put up by the Amunophs and Thotmes, whose names they bear. When made of the Nile-mud, or alluvial deposit, they required straw, to prevent their cracking; but those formed of clay taken from the torrent-beds on the edge of the desert, held together without straw."—*Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians."*

MARCH 8.—Afternoon Lesson.

the man "among the tombs."—Mark v. 1—20.

For repetition, verses 18, 19.

Summary.—In our last Afternoon Lesson our Lord stilled a great storm at sea. He now lulls a worse storm in a human bosom, and produces a more wonderful calm.

I. Possessed.—V. 1—5. *Gadarenes*,—or "Gergesenes," Matt. viii. 28. *An unclean spirit*,—a demon whom our Lord addresses, v. 8. The man had, probably, abandoned himself to uncleanness, and was therefore given over to this tyranny of the devil. *Among the tombs*,—places unclean,

because of the dead men's bones which were there, and, therefore, congenial to unclean spirits. See Num. xix. 11, 16. The man was naked, Luke viii. 27. His strength was more than human; so that *chains* and *fetters* were nothing to him. The devil gave him no rest; driving him now to *the mountains*, and now to *the tombs*, for his own hellish pleasure, and causing him to *cut* and bruise *himself with stones*, and to terrify all passers by (Matt. viii. 28) with his cries.

II. Worshipping.—V. 6, 8. The man appears to have had a double consciousness, and a double will. Sometimes it was his poor crushed self that thought and spoke, and sometimes the devil that was in him. Seeing Jesus *afar off*, and knowing, somehow, His gracious character, *he ran and worshipped Him*,—falling, doubtless, at His feet, and humbly imploring mercy. Had he yielded to the devil, he would have run from Jesus. *He* had *said*, &c.—This is given as the reason of the fiend's dismay, v. 7; so that our Lord immediately answered the poor man's prayer.

III. Compassionated.—V. 7, 9, 10. Being commanded to "come out of the man," the devil presumes to remonstrate with the Saviour, using his victim's voice. *He* well knew who Jesus was, though the Jews did not, John i. 10, 11. He knew, too, that he would have had nothing to *do with* Him yet, had he remained in his "own place," Acts i. 25; but, having left his appointed prison-house purposely to retard Christ's work, he merited special punishment, and was afraid. See James ii. 19. *Torment me not*,—"before the time," (Matt. viii. 29,)—i.e., the judgment-day. See 2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6; Rev. xx. 10. *Legion.*—There are different orders of devils, and this was a prince among them. A *legion*, in the Roman army, numbered from three thousand to five thousand men; but the word is simply put for *many*. *Out of the country.*—Jews and Gentiles lived there promiscuously, and were very wicked. For *out of the country*, Luke has, "into the deep;" literally, "the abyss,"—i.e., into hell.

IV. Dispossessed.—V. 11—13. *A great herd of swine,—about two thousand*,—kept contrary to law. See Lev. xi. 7, 8; Deut. xiv. 8. *Send us into the swine.*—These unclean animals were a fit home for unclean spirits. *Entered into the swine*,—as formerly Satan entered into the serpent. *And were choked.*—The man while possessed had sufficient reason to restrain him from destroying himself; but the entrance of the devils into the *swine* was immediately fatal. This result must have been very different from the expectation of the devils, being thus summarily sent "out of the country." Christ allowed the destruction of the swine by the same sovereign-authority by which He cursed the barren fig-tree. (Matt. xxi. 18—22.) "He is Lord of all." Acts x. 36. There was also a reason for it in the contempt of the owners for the Mosaic law.

V. Happy.—V. 14—17. *They that fed the swine*,—perhaps prodigals. See Luke xv. 12—16. They fled, in terror, to tell their employers. *In his right mind.*—His appearance was entirely changed; his restoration was complete; and he was as calm and rational as any of them. *Afraid*,—awestruck, as in the presence of God. *They began*, &c.—They begged Him to do them no further mischief! Not intending to reform, they desired not the knowledge of His ways. No wonder that the devils were loth to leave them.

VI. Witnessing.—V. 18—20. *Might be with Him.*—He feared, perhaps, a fresh incursion of the evil spirits, and wished not to be parted from his Deliverer. *Suffered him not.*—He was to go and gladden his *friends*, and be a witness for Christ to that ungodly population.

Reflections.—1. *Devils delight in making misery.*—Look again at the poor creature in the Lesson, and hear his horrible outcries. Such is the work of devils.

2. *Devils love to be where sinners are.*—These devils were at home among the Gadarenes; and wherever you see a company of idlers, scoffers, liars, swearers, or Sabbath-breakers, you are in the neighbourhood of evil spirits.

3. *Some think less of souls than of swine.*—To the Gadarenes, the loss of their neighbour's reason, and the jeopardy of his soul, were nothing to the loss of their swine. So it is where men are wickedly bought and sold; and so it is where people are busied

more about their worldly interests than the salvation of others.

4. *Some think more of their swine than of their Saviour.*—The Gadarenes were distressed by the loss of their swine, but begged the Saviour to leave them. They said, in effect, "We can do without Thee. Do not reprove us; do not instruct us; do not save us. Leave us to our swine, and sins, and sorrows; leave us to whatever fate is before us." He often visits you: entreat Him not to leave you; but beseech Him to remain.

5. *Evil men and evil spirits may pray, and be heard.*—Sometimes God's servants appear not to be heard; but the very refusal of their requests is a blessing. See 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. The wicked are as certainly scourged by the granting of their requests, as by the refusal of them. The devils were allowed to enter the swine; but the destruction of the whole herd followed, and that which they most dreaded came upon them. The Gadarenes begged Jesus to depart; and He took them at their word. Compare Exod. x. 28, 29; Ps. lxxviii. 29—31; Hos. iv. 17.

6. *Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.*—See Luke x. 18; 1 John iii. 8; Rev. xx. 2. Have Him on your side, and you may defy the devil.

QUESTIONS.—Who met Jesus? whence? What did he say? How many devils were there? When will they be punished? What did they request? What became of them? Why were the people afraid? What did they ask Jesus to do? why? What change was in the man? What was his request? Why was it refused?

Illustrations.—I. GADARA.

See v. 1. "Its most interesting remains are its tombs . . . . They are excavated in the limestone rock, and consist of chambers of various dimensions, some more than twenty feet square, with recesses in the sides for bodies . . . . . The present inhabitants of Um Keis, the old Gadara, are all troglodytes, dwelling in tombs, like the poor maniacs of old; and occasionally they are almost as dangerous to the unprotected traveller."—*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

II. A MOSLEM CEMETERY.

See v. 3. "Descending from the heights of Lebanon, I found myself in a cemetery. . . . . The silence of the night was now broken by fierce yells and howlings, which proceeded from a naked maniac, who was fighting with some wild dogs for a bone."—*The Crescent and the Cross.*

MARCH 15.—MORNING LESSON.

THE FOOLISH AND THE WISE.—Psalms xiv., xv.

SUMMARY.—Psalm xiv. describes the folly of ungodliness, and the shocking results it leads to; and Psalm xv. follows with a delineation of the godly, as an appropriate companion-picture.

I. A SAD PICTURE.—Ps. xiv. 1—3. *The fool hath,* &c.—The "fool" of the Bible is not an idiot; but one whose head is not so much at fault as his *heart.* He of whom David speaks desires *no God,*—no intelligent Governor of the universe, and so brings himself to say in his heart *there is* none. According to the following verses, the world is full of such fools. Men, in general, live as if there were no God. *The Lord looked down from heaven.*—There is, after all, a God, who reigns in heaven, and sees all that is done on earth; and so universal is the prevalent corruption, that even His all-seeing eye can find no piety among men. The statement, however, must be taken with some limitation. By *the children of men* are meant the whole human race in their natural state, as opposed to the children of God.

II. A DARK PROSPECT.—V. 4—6. *Have all the workers,* &c.—"Will they then not at once perceive, that they are such people as occasion sorrow to themselves?"—*Luther.* The question expresses astonishment at folly so unbounded. *Who eat up my people.*—The righteous were David's people, and their God his God. To *eat* the people is to use them for selfish ends, without ever thinking of their good. Compare Num. xiv. 9. *There were they in great fear.*—Though their hearts are so corrupt, their consciences are not dead; and in the very place where they indulge themselves securely, they are

seized with sudden terror. Compare Job xv. 21; 1 Thess. v. 3. *For God is*, &c.—His interposition occasions this fear. *Ye have shamed*, &c.—Affecting to believe there is no God, they ridiculed those who made Him their *refuge.*

III. A Pious Wish.—V. 7. The Psalm concludes with an earnest desire for the promised deliverance of the Church from her enemies. *Out of Zion*,—i.e., from God, whose dwelling-place was the tabernacle in Zion. *Bringeth back*,—literally, shall "return." *Captivity*,—a word used as an image of misery. Compare Job xlii. 10. When the Lord again visited His people in their afflictions, their sorrow would give place to joy.

IV. Psalm xv.—An Important Question.—V. 1. *Who shall abide*, &c.—Who is accounted worthy to participate in the blessings of the kingdom of God, of which Mount Zion, the *holy hill*, was a type? It is the most important of all questions.

V. A Satisfactory Answer.—V. 2—5. *He that walketh*, &c.—"The Psalmist draws the likeness of a pious people, without showing whence it was to come. Hence, a foolish person may apply all that is here said to the moral virtues and free-will, though it is solely a work of the grace of God, which He works in us."—*Luther. In his heart.*—These words confirm the view of the great Reformer: the good works mentioned must proceed from a pure heart. "Hypocrites," he says, "can do much, or even the whole of this, in appearance, for a time, but in a time of evil they do the reverse."

Reflections.—1. *Atheism is folly.*—They who say "There is no God," consider themselves wiser than others, and in the opinion of the world they are sometimes thought to possess distinguished talents; but in God's judgment they are sin-blinded "fools."

2. *The life may say "There is no God," while the lips speak another language.*—The folly of this is equally great, and equally fatal.

3. *The creed of the Atheist tends only to fill the world with violence and misery.*

4. *God often alarms those who deny His existence and government with "great fear."*

5. *To know and please God is true wisdom.*—To do this a sinner must be pardoned and born again; and then out of his new heart a new and holy life must grow.

6. *They who please God, shall dwell with God.*—The life of grace is the road to the life of glory.

Questions.—Who is "the fool?" What does he say? how? why? Are there many such fools? How have all "become filthy?" How do they show their want of knowledge? Why do they fear? Who are "the generation of the righteous?" What did David long for? Who shall dwell in God's holy hill? What marks of godliness are mentioned? How may sinful men bear these marks?

Illustrations.—I. "WHO EAT UP MY PEOPLE."

See Ps. xiv. 4. The Rev. Joseph Roberts gives the following Oriental sayings as illustrating this passage:—"Wicked one! the fiends shall eat thee." "That vile king eats the people, as he does his rice." "Go not near that fellow; he will eat thee."

II. USURY.

See Ps. xv. 5. Usury is an unlawful contract for the loan of money, to be returned again with exorbitant interest.

MARCH 15.—Afternoon Lesson.

THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL.—Romans iv.

(*For repetition*, verses 20, 21.)

Summary.—The way in which Abraham was justified, was David's way, and the way for the Gentiles: it was not of works, but of faith. It is the only way for us also.

I. Abraham's Way.—V. 1—5. *What shall we say then*, &c.—Here, and before, the Apostle is dealing with Jewish objectors. He has just proved (ch. iii. 31) that "the law" is "established through faith;" and hereupon rises this objection: What about *Abra-*

ham? If *justification* be not *by works*, what did he *find?* What good did his circumcision do him? *He hath whereof to glory*,—his own *works* having earned the blessing for him. *But not before God.*—The objector is here cut short. Abraham might well *glory*, or exult, that God was so gracious, but not that himself was good, as is perfectly clear from Scripture. See Gen. xv. 6. He was graciously *counted*, or accepted, as *righteous*, because he *believed*. *Now to him*, &c.—It is no act of *grace*, but of simple justice, to give a workman his wages; but to *reward* a man who has *not* worked, can only be an act of favour. All that Abraham did was to trust in a promising and forgiving God; and because he did this, he was pardoned.

II. David's Way.—V. 6—8. The way in which Abraham was justified, was the only way known to *David*, and taught by him to others. See Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. *Imputeth righteousness*,—"not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Covered*,—not remembered, not punished.

III. The Way for the Gentiles.—V. 9—12. *The circumcision*,—the Jews. *The uncircumcision*,—the Gentiles. This doctrine of justification by faith seemed to open the door of salvation to the uncircumcised Gentiles; a point on which all Jews were very jealous. *Not in circumcision*,—for that rite was not appointed until many years after he was justified. Compare Gen. xv. 6, with xvii. 25, and the marginal dates. *The sign of circumcision*,—as a *seal* to the blessing he had before received. *The father.*—The faithful are called Abraham's children, because they believe as he did. *Though they*, &c.,—for why may not all the uncircumcised be justified as he was? *Who also walk*, &c.—Even the Jews, his natural descendants, were not the true *seed* of "the father of the faithful," unless they believed, like him.

IV. Not of Works.—V. 13—17. *The promise.*—See Gen. xvii. 4, 8. This promise extended to Christ; (Gal. iii. 16;) and, as here explained, it implies that Abraham's spiritual *seed* will one day possess all lands. *Faith is made void.*—If they who depend upon the *law* are heirs, exclusive of others, all that is said about Abraham's *faith* *is* meaningless. *Worketh wrath*,—punishes sin. *Where no law is*, &c.—Where men have no law, either revealed or intimated, they are not transgressors; but the Jews had the law, and had broken it: to them, therefore, it could only work wrath. *Of faith*,—as the instrument. *By grace*,—as the cause. *To all the seed*,—believing Gentiles, as well as believing Jews. *Who quickeneth*, &c.—See Heb. xi. 12. God knows no difficulty; and His promises are as sure as if performed already.

V. But of Faith.—V. 18—22. *Against hope*,—against all apparent likelihood. *In hope*,—in God's promise, as a sufficient ground of hope. *He considered not*, &c. His *faith* was so strong as to overleap all the difficulties in its way. *Therefore*, &c.—Because he simply and in his heart believed God, without being *staggered*, or startled, by the greatness of the promise.

VI. For us, also.—V. 23—25. The design of the Holy Spirit in causing the account of Abraham's justification to be *written*, was not merely to honour his memory, but to show how we, and all other sinners, may be justified. *For our offences*,—dying to atone for our sins. For our *justification*,—i.e., that we might be justified.

Reflections.—1. *Salvation is all of God's mercy.*—We cannot earn, or merit, it. We are sinners, and must be punished, unless freely pardoned.

2. *Salvation can only be obtained by faith.*—Though provided for all, and free for all, unless we believe with our hearts unto righteousness, it never can be ours.

3. *Difficulty should not breed doubt.*—There were many difficulties in Abraham's way; but he "considered" nothing but the promise. It was a great thing to believe; but it would be a greater for God to lie. Unbelief is more credulous than faith.

4. *They are "blessed" who believe.*—See v. 7—9. Their faith, like Abraham's, is put to their account against all their sins; and henceforth, being justified, they have peace. See Rom. v. 1. Well, indeed, may they rejoice.

5. *Nothing glorifies God so much as a childlike faith*, v. 20.

QUESTIONS.—What did Abraham believe? What is it to be "justified?" Why are pardoned sinners happy? When was Abraham justified? What is proved from this? Of whom is Abraham the father? how? Why was his faith remarkable? Why was the account of it written? What must a sinner believe in order to get pardoned?

Illustration—UNBELIEF.

See v. 20. "O, the marvellous absurdity of unbelief! The man who is under its dire power will believe almost anything, except the promise of the Gospel, which he ought to believe most of all. He will suppose that God is enmity instead of love; that Christ's blood cannot cleanse from all sin, and that it is possible for God to lie,—sooner than he will rest upon the simple truth, to which heaven and earth loudly witness, that whosoever cometh to Christ shall be in no wise cast out." —*The late Dr. Bunting.*

MARCH 22.—MORNING LESSON.

"THE PATH OF LIFE."— Psalm xvi.; Acts ii. 25—32.

For repetition, Acts ii. 31, 32.

SUMMARY.—The title of this Psalm is, "Michtam of David." The Margin says, "A golden Psalm of David." The Hebrew word signifies something covered, or concealed, and is applied to *gold*, because that is *hidden* in the ground. It is best, perhaps, to read, "A secret of David;" i.e., a song with a hidden meaning, referring, especially, to the prophecy respecting Christ at the end.

I. DAVID'S CONFIDENCE.—V. 1—3. *Preserve me*, &c.—The words imply a situation of danger, in which, without Divine preservation, the speaker must perish. In such a situation God's people must often find themselves. They die daily, and require daily deliverance. Nothing can preserve them but a firm and simple faith in God. *O my soul*, &c.—In his own *goodness* David found nothing to rely upon; for he knew that it could not *extend* to God; i.e., it could not advantage Him. Compare Job xxii. 2, 3; xxxv. 7, 8; Rom. xi. 34, 35. It might, however, extend to others. By his example and benevolence he might do good to many; and what he could he would do, by promoting the happiness of the pious poor and the *excellent* in virtue everywhere, in whom was *all his delight*. "The sum is this, that, when we approach to God, we must lay aside all self-confidence; for, if we imagine that there is something in ourselves, we need not be surprised if He repel us, since we rob Him of the chief part of His honour."—*Calvin.*

II. HIS RESOLUTION.—V. 4. They who seek their salvation from any other *god*,—be it Dagon, or Baal, or Mammon,—get only in return, for the expensive sacrifices by which they hope to secure its favour, *a multitude of sorrows*. From all idol-gods, therefore, the Psalmist turns with horror. Not only their *offerings of blood*, but even their very *names* were abominable to him, and should not pollute his *lips*. The *blood* of animals, poured out in honour of these *gods*, was supposed to be *drunk* by them. The *sorrows* of their worshippers consist partly in the disappointment of their expectations; and partly in the Divine judgments which overtake them.

III. HIS PORTION.—V. 5—7. *The Lord is the portion*, &c.—This gives the reason why David would have nothing to do with false gods. The Lord was an *inheritance* sufficient for all his needs, and a *cup* of happiness which was never empty. His *lot*, which the measuring *lines* had marked out in such *pleasant places*, was *maintained*, or secured to him, by Almighty power. *Yea*, a *goodly heritage* was his! Such joy our hymnist felt:—

> "Thee I can love, and Thee alone.
> With pure delight and inward bliss:
> To know Thou tak'st me for Thine own—
> O what a happiness is this!"

It was through God's *counsel* that David had chosen the good part. His *reins also*,—i.e., his inward meditations,—led him to *bless the Lord*, not by day only, but also in *the night-season*.

IV. HIS HOPE.—V. 8—11, with Acts ii. 25—32. These verses give to the Psalm its title, *Michtam*, "a secret." They have a treble reference,—to David,

to all God's people, and to Christ; but they are strictly appropriate only to Christ. *Always before Me.*—See John viii. 28. *My glory,*—my soul. *In hope,*—i.e., of being raised again. *In hell,*—or "sheol," the place of the dead. *To see corruption.*—Compare Acts xiii. 36, 37. *Wilt show Me,* &c.—Wilt restore Me to life. *At Thy right hand,*—where Christ now sits and reigns.

Reflections.—1. *Call upon God in time of trouble.*—They who do not have no help,—no hope.

2. *Be a companion only of them that fear God.*—They are "the sons and daughters" of "the Lord God Almighty;" and to have their friendship is the highest honour.

3. *Hate everything that God hates.*—David abhorred idolatry; and we should abhor and shun everything belonging to the service of Satan.

4. *Seek your all in God.*—They who possess Him are supplied with everything requisite for life and godliness.

Questions.—For what does David pray? On what does he place his trust? Why not in his own "goodness?" To whom did that extend? how? What was his resolve? why? Why do idolaters have sorrow? How was his trust rewarded? For what does he bless the Lord? What prophecy did he utter? When was it fulfilled?

Illustration.—DRINKING-CUPS.

See v. 5. Cups of gold, and silver, and other materials were commonly used for drinking, as Pharaoh's, (Gen. xl. 11,) Joseph's, (Gen. xliv. 2,) and Solomon's, 2 Chron. ix 20. Barzillai supplied cups, (2 Sam. xvii. 28,) and Jeremiah set pots and cups before the Rechabites, Jer. xxv. 15. The word "cup" is often used figuratively for blessings, but oftener for afflictions and sufferings. See Ps. lxxiii. 10; Isai. li. 17; Jer. xxv. 17; Luke xxii. 42; John xviii. 11.

MARCH 22. — Afternoon Lesson.

TWO MIRACLES.—Mark v. 21—43.

Summary.—Jairus entreats Jesus to heal his dying child; and Jesus goes with him, followed by a crowd. A diseased woman touches Jesus, and is made whole. The child dies, but is raised to life again; and there is great astonishment.

I. The Child.—V. 21—43. (1.) *Faith appealing,* v. 21—23.—*One of the rulers,* &c.—The synagogues were at once law-courts and places of worship. *Fell at His feet,* &c.—This was more than a mark of respect paid to a superior. The magistrate believed that the carpenter's Son had power to rebuke the king of terrors. The child was "twelve years" old, (v. 42,) and his only "daughter," Luke viii. 42. *Lieth at the point of death,*—"is even now dead," Matt. ix. 18. When he left her couch, life was ebbing so fast, that he thought she could scarcely be living "now." (2.) *Faith encouraged,* v. 24.—Considering the father's wonderful faith, and touched with sympathy, Jesus consented to return with him. The *people,* who had come to hear His teaching, followed to see the end. (3.) *Faith tried,* v. 25—34.—This case would, of course, occasion some delay, which must have been very trying to the agonized father. Every moment was precious, for his child might be already dead. (4.) *Hope against hope,* v. 35, 36.—While the Lord is yet speaking to the woman, messengers arrive, announcing that the child was *dead;* but *as soon as Jesus heard the word,* he uttered new words of hope, leaving no room for a thought of unbelief to disturb the mind of the believing father. Let him only keep on believing, and all would yet be well. (5.) *Sleeping,* v. 37—39.—*Peter, and James, and John.*—As on other occasions, these chief and favourite disciples alone were privileged to witness what was to follow. Compare Matt. xvii. 1, 2; xxvi. 37. *The tumult,*—occasioned less by the genuine grief of the mother, than by the heartless lamentations of the hired mourners. *But sleepeth.*—To speak of death as a sleep is common in all languages; implying that death will be followed by a resurrection, as sleep by an awaking. (6.) *Awoke,* v. 40—43.—*And they,*—i.e., the hired mourners,—*laughed Him to scorn,*—i.e., laughed a loud, scornful laugh. *Put them all out.*—They could not be fit spectators of what even some of the Apostles were not allowed to see. Then, passing with His favoured disciples and the afflicted parents into the inner room, in which the dead child

lay, Jesus took her small, cold hand in His, and uttered His word of power; and she arose, and ate, and lived to make that darkened home bright again.

II. The Woman.—V. 25—34. (1.) *Incurable*, v. 25, 26.—She had shrunk from no treatment, however painful; she had gone from one doctor to another, parting with everything for medicine; and, though her estate was gone, her health was not improved. (2.) *Hoping ever*, v. 27, 28.—Hearing of Jesus, the Great Physician, she would try Him also; and such was her faith in Him, that she thought even a secret *touch* would heal her. (3.) *Restored*, v. 29.—A "touch" brought in a moment what she had failed to obtain from "many physicians" in twelve years. (4.) *Discovered*, v. 30—32.—The touch was not meant to be seen, and the woman would have kept her blessing secret, if she could. But Jesus never does good without requiring that it shall be made known. He asked, *Who touched*, &c.? not that He did not know, for He knew all things; (see John i. 48; ii. 25;) but to bring her to acknowledge her cure, and give her a yet greater blessing. (5.) *Saved*, v. 33, 34.—*Fearing*, &c.—Compare Phil. ii. 12. *Told Him all.*—To bring her to this was His reason for challenging her. It was her duty to acknowledge her cure. *Go in peace*, &c.,—i.e., pardoned, as well as healed.

Reflections.—1. *Children die.*—Go into the graveyard: what a number of short graves are there! Many Sabbath-scholars die, and you may soon. Your parents may survive, to come and weep over your grave. Your brothers and sisters may be spared, but their little playmate may be taken from them.

2. *Jesus will raise the dead.*—There was "great astonishment" when Jesus restored this little girl to life. How wonderful and awful will it be when all the dead, many of whom have been thousands of years "in the dust of the earth," shall hear His voice and come forth! If you love Him, you will die in peace; and be raised to a life of glory.

3. *Christ may be touched in vain.*—Crowds pressed Him, but only one touched in faith. Many come near Him in the ordinances of religion, but only believers are blessed.

4. *Christ's mercy must be acknowledged.*—The woman wished to be cured, but hoped it might be secretly. Many would get good in that way; but it is not Christ's way. See Rom. x. 9.

Questions.—Who was Jairus? What was a synagogue? How did Jairus approach Jesus? why so? What did he want? What message followed him? What did Jesus say? Who went with Him into the house? Who were the mourners? Why were they put out? Who came behind Jesus on the road? How did she show her faith? Why was she not allowed to go away unknown.

Illustration.—Synagogue-officers.

See v. 22. "These consisted of (1) the chief, or ruler, who acted as president in the assembly, Luke xiii. 14; (2) the elders, or 'rulers of the synagogue,' Luke vii. 3, Mark v. 22, who acted as colleagues of the president, Acts xiii. 15; and (3) the minister, or attendant, who cleaned the building, brought the books to the teacher, &c., Luke iv. 20."—*Scripture Manners and Customs.*

MARCH 29.—Morning Lesson.

Jesus and his messengers.—Mark vi. 1—13.

Summary.—Our Lord is rejected by His own countrymen, and sends forth His twelve Apostles.

I. Jesus Rejected.—V. 1—6. *His own country.*—Nazareth and its neighbourhood, Luke iv. 16. *Were astonished*,—not expecting to hear so much *wisdom* from their humble fellow-townsman. *The carpenter.*—The speakers, of course, knew Him well; and their words seem to intimate that, as Justin Martyr says, "He wrought, while among men, the ordinary works of a carpenter." His *mother*, &c., were all poor. *Were offended at Him.*—They thought Him a mere upstart, presuming to teach His betters. *A Prophet*, &c.—This was a current proverb. He meant, however, to be most *honoured* there, as He was in the end; for there He wrought more miracles, and made more converts, than anywhere else. For the time He

chose only to work *a few* miracles; but even those should have disarmed their enmity, and convinced them of His sovereign authority. Their *unbelief*, against such evidence, was truly *marvellous*.

II. SENDING THE TWELVE.—V. 7—13. *Two and two*,—thus: Peter with Andrew; James with John; Philip with Bartholomew; Thomas with Matthew; James the Less with Jude; and Simon with Judas Iscariot. See Matt. x. 2—4. They were sent in pairs, for mutual help and counsel. *Take nothing*.—Being specially commissioned, they would be specially provided for. They were to depend simply on the hospitality of the people, as the best way to win their hearts. *There abide*,—like men who have important business to attend to. Compare Luke x. 7. *The dust*,—which their feet have polluted. *Sodom and Gomorrha*,—whose inhabitants had less light to guide them. *Anointed with oil*,—which had, doubtless, a soothing effect upon the body; but it was a symbol of a more potent efficacy than itself possessed. See, for instances of such symbolic use of external applications, 2 Kings v. 14; Mark viii. 23; John ix. 6, 7.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *They who should know Christ best are often most ignorant of Him*.—Among these are all wicked Sabbath-scholars, and all godless children of pious parents.

2. *Beware of prejudice*.—The people of Nazareth heard Jesus not only with "astonishment," (v. 2,) but also with admiration. Luke iv. 22; yet they despised Him because He was only a carpenter. Do not despise your teachers if they happen to be poor. If you are prejudiced against any one, you prevent him from doing you good; and, most likely, do him a grievous wrong. If you could but see the heart, you would often admire where you despise, pity where you hate, and love where you think you cannot forgive.

3. *Beware of unbelief*.—Jesus did not do "many mighty works" among His own countrymen, "because of their unbelief," Matt. xiii. 58. Unbelief, therefore, ties up, so to speak, the hands of Omnipotence; while faith brings Almighty power into the service of men.

4. *Unbelief is a fault to be wondered at*.—Jesus "marvelled" at it, (v. 6,) and He may well marvel at it now. After all the proofs He has afforded of His power and will to save,—His miracles, sufferings, mercies, invitations, entreaties, promises,—"Why are YE so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" Mark iv. 40.

5. *Your advantages, if unimproved, will increase your guilt and punishment*.—The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha were very ungodly; but, if you reject the Gospel, you are more wicked than they; and to you the Day of Judgment will prove more terrible than to them.

QUESTIONS.—Where was Christ's own country? What did He do there? How did His neighbours receive Him? Why did they despise Him? How did He account for this? What did He not do there? why? Why is unbelief so marvellous? Who were the twelve? How were they paired? What were their powers? How were they equipped?

Illustrations.—I. SCRIPS.

See v. 8. "Do you suppose that this *wallet*, in which they carry their provisions, is the *scrip* which the disciples were directed *not* to take in their first missionary tours? No doubt; and the same, too, in which the young David put the five smooth stones from the brook. All shepherds have them, and they are the farmer's universal *vade-mecum*. They are merely the skins of kids stripped off whole, and tanned by a very simple process. . . . The modern Moslem prophet of *Tarshiha* thus sends forth his apostles over this very identical region."—*The Land and the Book*.

II. ANOINTING WITH OIL.

See v. 13. "The people of the East have a decided preference for external applications. When directed to take medicine, they ask, 'Cannot we have something to apply outside?' For almost every complaint a man will smear himself with bruised leaves, saffron, ashes of certain woods, or oils; and he professes to derive more benefit from them than from medicines taken internally; at all events, he knows they cannot do him so much harm."—*Roberts*.

The remaining Lesson for March will be given in the next Number.

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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

THE EMPIRE OF CONSCIENCE.

NAPOLEON once said, "My rule terminates where that of conscience begins." If the words are taken as simply declaring respect for the rights of conscience, and reverence for their sacredness, they set forth sentiments which are truly noble. May we not hope that they also expressed reverence for Him whose vicegerent conscience is,—that what he felt was, that the rule of Cæsar must never come into competition with the authority of God,—that when once a matter is taken into the court of conscience, the *Code Napoleon* must give way, for the voice of a higher law is heard there! A cynical critic might say that it was only the speech of a politic statesman, who had experience enough to know that men whose resistance to a monarch's rule is a matter of conscience, are the most troublesome and impracticable of law-breakers, whom it is wise to humour so far as the safety of the State will allow; and that it is a graceful way of yielding, to do it under the cover of an epigram or an aphorism! We would put a more generous interpretation on the words just quoted.

But, can we on theological grounds, or as a point of Christian ethics, accept the principle implied, that there is a considerable part of human conduct to which the rule of conscience does not reach? Can we admit that the domain of human law, and that of the higher law, to which conscience appeals, are separate and independent; lying side by side, perhaps,—coterminous, but yet covering quite different spheres? Far from this; with the New Testament in our hands, we must hold that the domain of that higher law extends over all the ground covered by the lower law, besides having a sphere peculiarly its own. Cæsar's law has no ground to itself, but must rule in everything subordinately to God's law.

There is not a point where the rule of conscience begins, and up to which, as conscience does not rule, some other authority may; and, of course, if that were the case, might rule absolutely. The rule of conscience has begun, in respect of time, as soon as conscience herself has awakened and found a voice. In respect of the matters under its jurisdiction, that rule has begun

as soon as the most trifling *voluntary* act has been performed. Every voluntary act has a motive of some sort, of which conscience ought to take cognizance, and upon which it should pronounce judgment. The imperial aphorist would have expressed more justly the relations between human authority and that Authority which conscience in a man represents, if he had said, "The authority of my rule must end where the rule of conscience opposes my decrees. My yea must bow before that Nay, and my nay be of none effect in the presence of that Yea."

But are there not "matters of indifference" with which conscience has nothing to do? We would answer,—none at all. Are there not matters in which we may be guided by taste, or conventional laws, or expediency, simply? No, we would say, not *simply*. The dictates of taste, or conventionalism, or expediency, must at least be referred to the court of conscience, and have her sanction and endorsement before they are acted upon. "Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "He that eateth, eateth to the Lord . . . He that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not." Do these principles leave any room for "matters of indifference?" To carry them out, must there not, in all things, be a reference to that Christian conscience which is corrected by the word of Christ, and enlightened by His Spirit; by which we decide what can be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and what will be "to the glory of God?"

If Cæsar's law commands what God's law neither forbids expressly nor enjoins, still, that does not constitute a "matter of indifference" in the court of conscience. The very obedience "to the powers that be" must be, on one of the highest principles, recognized in that court; it must be "for the Lord's sake." "Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

If in an instance in which the law of God allows you either to do the thing or not to do it, you do it as being expedient, that expediency itself must have at least the sanction of conscience. If you do it "to please your neighbour," it must be "for his good to edification," or for some other reason which conscience approves.

Though there is no point "where the rule of conscience begins," and so no portion of human conduct which is not covered by that authority, there are portions where that authority is silent. Conscience is appealed to, and gives no judgment, or gives a doubtful one. What is to be done then? The inquiry is most

important, and we would draw special attention to it, because we think that on such occasions a false rule is very commonly laid down. In such a case, what does that loyalty to conscience, which is loyalty to God, require? May we proceed to act *because conscience does not forbid?* or, must we halt *because conscience does not give its sanction?* The latter is the safe and the scriptural rule; the former is a false and dangerous one, against which we would lift a warning voice. We must avoid what seems to be sinful, as well as what is evidently so; and the fact that conscience hesitates to approve, is sufficient proof that what is in question wears some evil aspect. We must be "fully persuaded in our own mind" that the thing is right, and until we are so must not do it, even though we may be far from "being fully persuaded" that it is wrong.

What a wide difference there is between the rule, common in the world, not to do a thing if we are sure that it is wrong; and the scriptural rule, not to do a thing unless we are sure that it is right! What perilous debateable ground one rule allows a man to range over, which the other rule warns him off! We commend the latter to the reader; for, seeing that "he that doubteth is condemned if he eat," this is the only rule by which he can maintain the "ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD." E. D. W.

A PLEA FOR LESS NOISE IN SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

BY A FEMALE TEACHER.

THE annoyance of "noise" is one which exists in most Sunday-schools; and the particular kind of it, against which I make an appeal, is not the stir and commotion incident upon taking places and finding lessons, nor is it the inquietude and restlessness generally experienced on a very hot afternoon,—all the more difficult to repress, because its cause is, in part, physical, nor any of those occasional disturbances which call for the intervention of the superintendent.

Not any of these. But, for the sake of my sisters engaged, with myself, in a work which ought to be a delight, I venture to enter a gentle protest against the want of thought (or respect for our weakness, if so to style it be preferred) which renders much of our Sabbath employment more of a toil than it might otherwise be.

To be plain. The command is given from the desk that the children begin the reading-lesson; and, may be, some fifteen or twenty classes respond to the direction. What care, then, is necessary, on the part of every teacher, so to regulate the manner in which his pupils read, that other classes may not be interrupted! Why not persuade every boy to read in a subdued manner? The loudest tones are not necessarily the most distinct. A confusion of tongues often arises where there need only be a quiet hum. Far better that the sound created by reading be as "the drowsy murmur of many bees," than the discordant shout of many voices, each raised in a different key.

I speak from experience when I say that it is often difficult for teachers of the girls' classes to hear even their own words, when so many others are ringing in their ears. Often do they return home, weary and discouraged; with headaches which quite unfit them for the evening service, and a bitter sense of disappointment. They had prepared the lesson; but the toil was in vain, and they "spent their strength for nought."

Surely, the authority of the desk ought not to be needed to regulate so simple a matter. "Softly! softly! my boy! Confine your voice to your class; you are not reading to the girls, but to me;" if firmly and kindly urged by teachers, would, in most instances, be sufficient.

I am hopeful that these brief remarks will, in many cases, have the desired effect. We know that no intentional annoyance would be given to us female teachers; but, as fellow-workers in a cause very dear to us, any scruple about mentioning such a hindrance to our usefulness would be false delicacy; and we have sufficient confidence in the kind feeling and good sense of our stronger-voiced friends, on the other side of the school-room, to believe that they would rather, if need be, exercise a little self-denial in their own classes, than give unnecessary pain to us, and needlessly interfere with our success. J. S. C. I.

HINTS FOR MAINTAINING ORDER IN THE CLASS.

1. Always be in your seat at least two minutes before the exercises commence.

2. Never absent yourself without sending previous notice to the superintendent.

3. Sit where you can see all your scholars at a glance.

4. Speak in soft, quiet tones.

5. Allow no talking except about the lessons.

6. Permit no one to leave the class except in cases of necessity.

7. Teach intelligently, earnestly, prayerfully; expecting to bring your scholars to know and love Christ.

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

THE YOUNG CONFESSOR.

A young teacher in America, during her vacation, became very earnestly desirous to be a true disciple of Jesus. She sought aid from the instructions and prayers of the devoted Christians about her; and struggled, with many tears and supplications, for an assurance of the forgiveness of her sins, and for grace to consecrate her life to the Master's service. For a long period she found no relief, and her inward distress seemed rather to increase than to abate. The attention of a wise and kind Minister was called to her case. By careful inquiries in reference to her position, and the surrounding circumstances at her home, he learned that she was an orphan, and had the charge of a school in a small town where there was no church, nor any religious privileges.

"Do you think you are willing to trust yourself entirely in Christ's hands?"

"I do," was the answer.

"Are you willing to enter upon any work that He reveals to be your duty?"

"I trust I am."

"Will you pray in your school for the children placed under your instruction?"

"I cannot do that."

"But you were willing, you thought, to do anything?"

"Anything, but this. The community is a very irreligious one. The school-house was built with the understanding that no Minister should preach in it, and no meeting be held there."

"For this very reason the Saviour, probably, has sent you there."

"But I should lose my place at once if I attempted to pray."

"Are you unwilling to trust your Master in this?"

"I am an orphan. I know not where to turn if I lose my position."

"Are you afraid to trust Jesus to provide for you, if, in doing the work which He appoints, you lose your place?"

It was a severe test,—like that to which Jesus put the young ruler, whom He required to sell his "great possessions;" but it seemed that her peace and salvation depended on her assent. At length she said, "Through Christ strengthening me, I will do it at any cost."

The storm was over. She had accepted the Saviour with the loss of everything besides, if necessary, and "there was a great calm." Henceforth, "in the world" she might have "tribulation," but in Christ "peace."

She returned to her school, praying without ceasing for strength to keep her resolution. At the close of the first day of the term, with considerable trembling, she told the children that if any of them wished to hear her read a story from the Bible, they might stop after school was dismissed. The children tarried, held by their natural curiosity. She read the story of Jesus receiving little children, and taking them in His arms. Then she knelt down to pray. Her feelings were too strong for expression, and she burst into a flood of tears. The children were powerfully impressed by this unwonted sight. She recovered so far as to be able to offer a few simple words of prayer for her little flock, and then dismissed them. Of course the village was soon excited with the strange story brought home by the children. The little daughter of the principal man among the school-managers hurried into the house with her face still wet with tears, and, running to her father, said, "You don't know how Miss A—— cried, and we all cried!"

"Why, what's the matter," said the wondering man; "what have you been crying about?"

"Miss A—— read to us about Jesus taking little children in His arms; and then she fell upon her knees and cried, and we all cried together."

The gentleman was one of the most bitter foes of religion in the town, and one of the leaders in the plan to keep meetings out of the place. Here was a strange revelation! What was to be done? There was certainly no time to lose. He hastened to another member of the committee, and asked him if he knew what was going on at the school-house. "What's the trouble now?" his colleague inquired.

"Why, Miss A—— has got a meeting a-going, and has set all the children crying, as if they were frightened out of their senses!"

"Well, what shall we do about it?"

"Let us go to her boarding-house, and put a stop to it at once."

Miss A—— had retired to her room deeply affected, and feeling the weight of the cross she had attempted to bear. She anticipated the consequences, and went upon her knees to seek help of Him who had said, "As thy days so shall thy strength be."

She was summoned before the committee, and was asked to explain the singular course which she had pursued with her school. She quietly answered

that, "after all the duties of the day were over, she told the scholars that any who pleased might remain to hear her read the Bible."

"Don't you know we have forbidden preaching and holding meetings?"

"After I have done my duty to the school, my time is my own, and I must follow my convictions of duty as to the use I make of it."

"There is only one thing to be done," said the chairman of the committee; "we like you as a teacher; our children have become attached to you; we should be sorry to have the school close at this time; but we can't have this whining going on. You must promise to give it up, or resign your place."

To resign, was to go, she knew not whither — to go without a recommendation, and in apparent disgrace; but she put her trust in God, believing that she would not be "confounded."

"I must obey God rather than man, though I have to find shelter in the almshouse," was her answer.

"Then we are to understand that your mind is made up?"

"It is; when shall I close the school?"

"On Friday." And there they left her firm in her resolution.

Until Friday evening she continued her work, lingering every afternoon to read the Bible and to pray with the children. Now the end had come. She explained to the children that her connexion with the school had ceased, and she could only commend them to the Saviour once more in prayer. The scholars wept, and the teacher wept. Upon her knees, with the weeping children around her, she lifted up her voice, and sang:—

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be.
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, or hoped, or known;
Yet, how rich is my condition,
God and heaven are still my own!"

The little daughter of the chairman was remarkably affected during this hour of prayer. She was sure Jesus loved her, and that her sins were forgiven. She hastened home, and found her father.

"O, Papa," she said, throwing her arms around his neck, "Jesus loves me. He has forgiven my sins. I have been naughty, and disobeyed you and Mamma, but I shan't do so now;" and the little hot tears fell down upon his face. The strong man trembled, and did not know what to say.

"Now, Papa," she continued, "I want you to do something for me. Will you promise me that you will?"

"What is it?"

"Promise me first."

He gave his promise almost without thinking.

"Come up stairs, then." She led him, somewhat reluctant, into the chamber. "Now, Papa," said she, "kneel down." He could not do that, he said. "But you promised!" persisted the little evangelist; "you promised!"

Down went the stalwart man upon his knees, pressed, as it seemed to him, by an iron hand.

"Pray to Jesus, Papa; He loves little children, and He will love you."

The subdued man could only groan as he fell upon the floor.

"Ask Jesus to love you," continued the little disciple; "He will come to you soon. He made me so happy."

But the aged sinner only continued to groan. His wife heard him; and being alarmed, hastened into the room, and became still more distressed when she saw his agony.

"Shall I go and call teacher?" whispered the little girl.

"O, no! not her," cried out the struggling man.

"Then pray to Jesus," said the little one by his side.

His distress became too bitter to endure, so that he said, at last, "Yes; go and call the teacher."

She was packing up her scanty wardrobe to leave the town when the messenger came. What a request! to come and pray for the man who had closed her school on account of prayer!

It was a night never to be forgotten. Prayer was offered by the trembling teacher, and such counsels were given as the Saviour taught her in that hour. Jesus knew how to touch the heart of the child, and how to break in pieces and bind up the heart of the mature sinner. He triumphed in that house. Father, and mother, and children found the Saviour. The teacher was sent back to the school without restrictions as to religious labours. The good work spread until fifty were converted, a Church was organized, and a Minister invited to labour among them.

We are not called now to confess Christ in the dungeon, or at the stake, but before men. It is sometimes almost as severe a trial to do this as it would be to lose an eye or a hand. We must not shrink; for it is better to lose these, than to lose heaven. Jesus calls us to this great cross because by it He saves others. If I bear it, it is after Him; and He will hold me up, and my cross may be, as in the instance of this teacher, a cause of profit to others.—*Zion's Herald.*

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

A GIN-DRINKER'S CHILD.

None of our readers will peruse the following distressing narrative without pain: we hope it will awaken sympathy which will prove practically beneficial. Its sad picture shows only too forcibly what urgent opportunities for evangelical effort may be found among the unhappy ragged children in our streets, and their yet more degraded parents. It is taken from the columns of the *Star* newspaper.

He was very little, very dirty, and very much of a vagabond. So little, that you might have stowed him away in a return herring-barrel, and shipped him to Yarmouth among the "empties;" so dirty, that my Lady Flora's lapdog would have turned up his nose at him had they met at a corner; and so much of a vagabond, that my Bohemian sympathies went out towards him instinctively. It was in passing through a court off Drury-lane that I heard a rough voice exclaim, "Get out, yer vagabond, and don't come back till yer ken bring back the price ov a quartern ov gin."

At the same moment a small bundle flew out of a doorway, and lodged at my feet; and in an instant it got up and scudded away, with bare feet, down the court into Brydges-street. There it crouched within a doorway; and, as I passed it, I heard it sobbing in a muffled, subdued, and self-restrained fashion, from which I concluded it would soon be in motion again. So I walked to the corner and waited.

It was a clear September night. The harvest-moon shone brilliantly, and a thousand stars vied with each other in radiance; while Venus contrasted her diamond lustre with the moon's pale glow. At another time, earth rather than heaven, the street rather than the firmament, the mysteries of humanity rather than the wonders of the sky, would have attracted my attention; but a dark semi-circular obscuration of the moon's disc, which grew as I watched it, reminded me that the astronomers had foretold a lunar eclipse for that same night. It was past eleven o'clock; but the street-lamps, and

even the floods of gaslight from the drinking-shops, seemed dull in the moonlight; and I was fancying that in the shade of the earth's shadow on the moon's surface—if one may so express an optical impression—I could trace the outlines of the mountain-ranges, and lake-boundaries, and desert-borders, with which lunar photographs and the treatises of the scientific have made us somewhat familiar, when a piping voice, down in the region of my knees, offered me "Cigar-lights, or pipe-lights, on'y a 'ap'ny a box."

It was my little vagabond, looking up at me with a face so pale and delicate, and with eyes so lustrous, and bordered with such deep dark lines, that I forgot the lunar in the human, and gave him a penny for a box of bad fusees. Then he limped along the Strand, and I followed him.

He kept close to the wall, along the north side of the way, darting now and then out of the shadow of the shop-fronts into the glare of the light, to solicit custom of some smoker on the pavement. I noticed that he got many rebuffs, and some curses; and that for a long while the only help he had was from a woman,—gaudily dressed, and with a sad face, half-disguised by a simper of mock merriment, and for all the world as much a vagabond as he,—who searched her pocket to the bottom for her last copper, and gave it him, and told him to "go home as soon as he could."

He halted in front of the King's Head Tavern, and here I watched him. During half an hour he offered his wares to dozens of men who came out of or went into the tavern, and he sold not one half-penny box. Other boys came up, and at length I heard them in hot argument. The tallest of them bet the rest a penny that none of them dared go inside the tavern, and try to sell fusees to the people standing at the bar. After much hesitation, my little vagabond volunteered to win the penny, and, pushing open the door, he ventured in. He tried all round, but all refused to buy; and the child was still importuning one of the customers when a barman, emerging suddenly from a doorway in the counter, pounced upon him, cuffed him on the ear, and with a kick ejected him into the street. His precipitate expulsion cleared the pavement round the entrance for a moment; and when he raised himself, to rub his aching limbs, and claim his penny, the lads who had tempted him to the venture were out of sight. He sighed heavily for so slight a creature, and rested against the lamp-post till he recovered a little; and then he tried to muster up vigour enough to fulfil his task, and went towards Charing Cross.

I was wondering what amount of endurance and resolution might be necessary to enable so little a vagabond to get "the price of a quartern of gin," when I saw him stagger and fall. Nobody helped him; but the shock of the fall seemed to arouse him for the moment, and he wandered on, getting no custom, till he found his way into Trafalgar-square. Here, seeing nobody likely to buy his fusees, he staggered into a corner, under one of the lions, and dropped down in a little heap upon the flags. And thus, as I walked to and fro, and watched him, he fell fast asleep.

I could have wished that society in this huge city had not forbidden sleep to those who are too poor to pay for beds, or that the moon had been compassionate and tempered her light, as the policeman strolled along the pavement, and passed the corner where the little vagabond slept. But neither society nor the moon was merciful, and the light shone full upon the little heap of rags, crouched down within the angle of the monument. The constable stopped, and, having nothing more serious to do, went up to the child, and shook him out of his slumber. The little creature was slow to realize the circumstances; but as soon as his eyes were open wide enough to see the custodian of the public peace standing over him, and his ears sharp enough to hear the adjuration, "Start out of this, or I'll have to lock you up," the little fellow jumped to his feet, and limped away along the flags towards Pall Mall. There I saw him halt, and lean against the doorpost of a house, in utter weariness; and, as I passed him, he ejaculated an infantine moan that signified his childish despair.

But a moment changed the scene. Up came a boy as big again as he, whistling a popular tune, and he turned to the doorway where my vagabond was hiding, and asked, with a rough sort of compassionate interest, "Now then, what are you piping about?"

The little fellow turned to the lad who accosted him, and, after wistfully scrutinising his face, told him, in a few short, childish, and pitiful sentences, how desolate and miserable he was.

"Come you along o' me," said the bigger boy, seizing the child by the hand, and half dragging him out of the doorway. The little one did not resist, and they went together through the Haymarket, and so found their way to Great Windmill-street, where they stopped opposite the Argyle Rooms. Here the taller boy betook himself to reconnoitering the fashionably-dressed men and women who entered or emerged from the dancing-saloon. I had followed pretty closely, and at length I heard him say, "'Taint no use a-waiting 'ere; we shan't get a grab to-night."

Thereupon he led the little vagabond back to the Haymarket, and presently he said, "'Ain't you hungry?"

"Yes," said the little one, eagerly.

"Then look ye 'ere; dy'e see that old 'oman t'other side the way, selling apples and cakes?"

The little vagabond nodded assent.

"Will you go and slip behind her, and nail as much as you can get off the stall?"

The little vagabond paused a minute, and then he said, "If I do, the Bobby 'll ha' me."

"If you don't," said the big boy, "I'll beat ye so as you don't get home to-night."

The little fellow hesitated for a moment longer, then dashed across the road under the head of one cab-horse, and almost under the hoofs of another, and passing swiftly behind the woman who kept the stall, he seized a handful of fruit from one side, and a couple of cakes from the other, and dashed down the street as fast as his tired little legs would carry him. The big boy — who, in his greater strength and his power to threaten, represented Fate to this child — looked on till the theft was accomplished, and then moved away on the opposite side of the street, in the direction in which the little vagabond had fled. He had two purposes, as tempters always have; first, to secure his share of the plunder, if no danger stood in the way; and, second, to take care of himself if retribution should speedily overtake the ostensible offender. But that night Morality was wide-awake, and Justice scarcely slumbered; for, as the little vagabond scudded along the pavement, and kept a tortuous course among the neighbouring streets and alleys, there followed him a strong and supple man, who cried, at every turning in the way, "Stop thief!" At length, when the child was worn almost to death, with efforts and with fright, the strong hand of a constable fell upon his shoulder, and brought him to a stand. Scarcely to a "stand," for the child fell and fainted, and was all unconscious; while a crowd of wonder-seekers gathered round, and he who had been hot in pursuit came up and told of the theft in vehement words. The constable had even to take the diminutive creature in his arms to carry him to the station, and not till he got there did the child recover the use of his limbs or of his tongue.

The evidence was plain against him. There was the Nemesis of Justice, who had volunteered to hunt him, and there was the woman from whom he had stolen. His little, childish tale, that, in fewer words, embodied all that I have told, caused much amusement in the station-house among the constables; and, before the little fellow could realize one-half of the seriousness of his position, he was lodged in a cell, and left to sleep or to tremble until morning.

There, not caring to pursue a hopeless task, I left the little vagabond, consoling myself with the reflection that a police-cell was scarcely worse, even if it were so bad, as the home to which this child should have returned when he had obeyed the paternal injunction, and secured the "price of a quartern of gin."

Every story has its sequel; but the sequel is not always told. Let me tell

what followed my night with the little vagabond. Something that was not altogether curiosity, nor altogether compunction, induced me to go on the following morning to the police-court of the district where this child had been apprehended. I was early, and got a seat in the court; and when I had been edified for an hour or more with stories of drunkenness, brutality, and violence, I saw the tiny creature brought up to the dock. He was so small, that his head scarce reached above the partition in front of him; and when the magistrate had looked for some seconds for the culprit without seeing him, the officer explained how small a culprit he was. Then the evidence was taken. That of the stall-woman was common-place enough; but that of the man who had tracked the child and stopped him, elicited from the magistrate an eloquent tribute of commendation. The little vagabond was asked what he had to say, and he told again the childish story he had related in the station the night before. The magistrate listened attentively to what he said, and, when it was over, asked whether there was any one in court who knew the child. Nobody did, except myself; and I at length stepped forward, and told what I had seen. The result was a remand till the following day, with an order to the police to find the people who had driven him out when I first met him.

I went again the following day; and, when he was brought up, a ragged and dissipated-looking creature was placed in the witness-box, to identify the child.

"What do you know about this boy?" said the magistrate.

"That's my son, Sir," answered the witness.

Then the evidence I had given was read over to him, and he was asked what he knew about the driving of this little vagabond into the streets. He told a tale about his poverty and his helplessness, and the troubles that he thought left him dependent on the efforts of this child for the means to keep life within him; and the abject meanness of his manner told the rest.

The theft was proved. So were the circumstances that had led to it. The magistrate saw the circumstances as they were, and, wishing to blend mercy with the justice he was bound to execute, committed the culprit to gaol for three days, and added to the sentence, "five years in a reformatory." The little vagabond went down from the dock crying piteously; and the father who had driven him forth to beg or steal the "price of a quartern of gin," went out of court protesting that he could not, and would not, pay eighteenpence a week for the keeping of such a little vagabond as he. At all events, the penal prisons were cheated of a victim, and civilized society was told once more how closely inevitable crime clings to the skirts of selfish indulgence.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

April 12.—Section IV., Question I.

Jacob Links's Blunders.

Keudo Links was a native of South Africa, and a heathen. He had a son, known as Jacob Links, who became a very good man. Jacob thus wrote concerning himself: "Before I heard the Gospel, I was in gross darkness. One came to our place who spoke much of sin, and also of Jesus. By means of his conversation I was made very sorrowful, but knew not what to do. My mother had some leaves of an old Dutch psalm-book. I thought that, if I ate them, I might find comfort. I ate the leaves up; but my distress was not lessened. I then got upon the roof of an old house to pray, thinking that, if I were high, the Lord would hear me better; but I found no deliverance. I then ate all sorts of bitter bushes; for I thought that possibly I might thus find mercy from the Lord. I then heard that I must give my cause over to Jesus, and tried so to do.

Through the word which the Lord gave our Missionary to speak, I learnt that my heart was bad, and that the precious blood of Jesus alone cleanses from sin. Now I found that Christ is the way, Christ is the sinner's Friend."

April 19.—Sect. IV., Quest. II.

The Caldron of Oil.

A man was at work in a manufactory. On the premises there was an immense caldron in which tallow was melted, and made exceedingly hot. The man heard a scream: he soon discovered what had happened. His own son had climbed so as to look into the caldron, which at the time was full of the scalding liquid, had lost his balance, and fallen in. The father in a moment, thrust his arm into the caldron to save his child. But he could neither grasp the lad nor endure the torture. He was compelled to withdraw his arm, and allow his unhappy son to perish, though so near to him. The father was willing to do anything he could; but he could not save his son. We ought to be thankful that the Lord Jesus was both able and willing to save us. When entering on his last sufferings, Jesus said: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." But He still went on, and wrought out our salvation.

April 26.—Sect. IV., Quest. III.

A Soldier at Waterloo.

Among the thousands who were mortally wounded during the memorable battle of Waterloo, were some who loved Jesus, and found Him present to comfort them in their latest sufferings. One of these was carried by some comrades to the rear, and laid under a tree. It was evident that he could not long survive. He desired that his knapsack should be opened, and his much-loved Bible taken out of it; and then said,—"Read to me a few words before you leave me." "What shall I read?" "The twenty-seventh verse of the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel." So the dying man's friend read to him the gracious words of Christ: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . .Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Now," said the wounded soldier, "I die happy! I have peace with God; that peace which passeth all understanding." Shortly afterwards one of the officers passed the spot where the man was lying, and inquired how he fared. "I die happy!" was the reply, "for I have peace with God." So saying he breathed his last.

May 3.—Sect. IV., Quest. IV.

George H. Decker's Father.

The labours of Christian Missionaries at Sierra-Leone have been greatly blessed by God. Many Africans, not a few of them re-captured slaves, have been led to Jesus. Among these was a youth named George H. Decker. He became very devoted to Christ, and was exceedingly useful as a preacher. He was at length entirely set apart for the work of the Christian ministry. George had, however, one painful anxiety. Although he had been privileged to witness the salvation of many souls, his own father, living in the colony, remained unconverted. He knew that his father could only be saved by repenting of his sins and believing on Jesus, and the aged man was neglecting to do this. But George kept on praying for his father, and trying to do all the good he could. His desire was at length gratified. In an account of Good-Friday, 1852, he wrote, "We wrestled with God that night in mighty prayer; sixteen persons were set at liberty, and one of them was my dear old father. My joy was so great, that it was inexpressible."

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

April 12.—Sect. VI., Quest. XXIX.

The Great Deliverance.

Slavery, in many forms, has prevailed in our world. Myriads have groaned under the oppression to which they have been thus subjected. But the worst kind of bondage is that of sin. No other tyranny makes the victim so completely miserable, and renders the prospect before him so utterly dark. All other forms of despotism must necessarily have an end. No slave-driver can have property in those who have been removed by death. But the bondage of sin, unless brought to an end by the grace of God, will be perpetuated for ever. We may well be thankful that provision has been made for such a termination. We may be thus saved by Christ. Jesus said, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." (Luke xi. 21, 22.)

Christ waits to save us from our sins.—Some unconverted people are very proud: others are very covetous, so as to be unwilling to part with money, however much they have, and however needy those around them may be: others have such a desire for strong drink, that they will have it, although they know that their intemperance makes themselves and others very wretched. There are other forms of sinfulness. Satan, by means of these, keeps possession of the soul. They form the "armour" in which he trusts. But Jesus can save the unhappy sinners.

When saved we shall be enabled to serve God.—All that God has entrusted us with may then be employed in His service as it ought to be. Our hands and feet, our eyes and ears, our tongues and brains, all that belongs to us may be used for God's glory. So long as the "strong man armed" kept possession he had his own bad way. When we are saved, Jesus will have His good way.

Exercises.—What is the worst form of oppression? Who suffer from that sort of slavery? Is there any possibility of deliverance? Who is the only Deliverer? How must we seek His help? When saved, shall we have power to love and serve God?

April 19.—Sect. VII., Quests. I. and II.

The Sacraments.

The word "sacrament" is applied by Protestants to two Christian ordinances, and to two only. What are these? Baptism and the Lord's Supper resemble each other in some particulars, in which, however, they are unlike any other ordinances; for which reason we speak of these two *only* as sacraments. We do not find the word "sacrament" employed thus in any part of the New Testament; but wise and good men have felt persuaded that it was convenient and advantageous to use it in the way named.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are both symbolical.—We have not many symbols in the Christian Church. Among the Israelites, in ancient times, many were used. One thing was employed to represent another. The High-Priest sometimes represented Christ. The "holiest place" represented heaven. The white robes worn by the priests represented purity of soul. The Lord Jesus did not appoint many such symbols for use in the worship of the Christian Church; He only instituted two. Water, in Baptism; and bread and wine, in the Lord's Supper, are used as emblems.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are of Divine authority.—Romish priests frequently anoint dying people with oil. They never do this so long as there is any hope of their recovery. They call the rite "extreme unction," and speak of it as a sacrament. But the practice has not God's authority. The early Christians did occasionally anoint a sick person with oil, when they hoped that he might recover; (James v. 14;) but that was not "extreme unction." Jesus Himself appointed the Lord's Supper and Baptism. (Matt. xxvi. 26—28; xxviii. 19.)

Both represent our covenant-relation to God.—The Israelites were formally admitted into covenant-relation to God by circumcision: we are by Baptism. They repeatedly declared that relation by the Passover: we, by the reception of the Lord's Supper. Neither sacrament will of itself save us, but each one pictures the truth that all saved persons belong to God, and have His blessing.

Exercises.—How many sacraments are there? What are their names? What is a symbol? Who appointed Baptism and the Lord's Supper? What do the sacraments represent? Will merely receiving them save our souls? Is it right to neglect them?

April 26.—Sect. VII., Quests. III. and IV.

The Sign and the Grace.

The sign without the grace.—We must not suppose that all who are baptized are regenerated. In order to be saved from our sins we must ourselves, with penitent and believing hearts, seek forgiveness and renewal from God. We read that, soon after the martyrdom of Stephen, an evangelist named Philip, went to the city of Samaria, and there preached Christ. There was at that time in Samaria a wicked impostor, who had persuaded the people that he possessed superhuman powers. Many, therefore, greatly feared and honoured him. No doubt that these,

when in trouble, were willing to give much money to the sorcerer, that he might help them. What was his name? Many of the Samaritans believed what Philip told them. Simon himself, when he saw the wonderful miracles performed by Philip, was convinced that Philip was really a servant of God, and that his words were true; so he was baptized. Did baptism change the wicked sorcerer's heart? If he had been really sorry for his sins, it would have been right for him to be baptized, and God would have made the ordinance a blessing to him. But he was not penitent; so he received no benefit from baptism. The sign was there, but not the grace. (Acts viii. 9—23.)

The sign with the grace.—Saul of Tarsus went to Damascus to persecute the disciples of Jesus. As he drew near to the city a light shone about him, a Voice reproved him for his conduct, he was deprived of sight, and had to be led into the city. But he had yielded to the grace of God, and was now seeking to be saved from his sins. The Lord sent one of His disciples to instruct Saul more perfectly. What was the name of that disciple? Ananias directed Saul to pray; but he also directed him to be baptized, and so acknowledge himself to be a disciple of Jesus. Saul knew how much suffering this would expose him to; yet he willingly submitted. We are not sure that Saul received the blessing at the moment of his baptism; but he was saved. (Acts xxii. 16.)

Exercises.—What element is used in baptism? What does the water represent? What are the words used in baptism? To whom is the baptized person professedly dedicated? Are all born again who are baptized? From whom must we seek the grace represented?

May 3.—Sect. VII., Quest. V.

Baptismal Privileges.

Believers received by baptism into the Church of Christ—The Apostle Paul, after preaching for some time in Asia Minor, learned that it was the Lord's will that he should carry the Gospel into regions beyond. He entered Europe. The first city in Europe in which he preached was Philippi. The Apostle went to a place near a river-side, where some devout people were accustomed to meet for prayer. There St. Paul declared how the true Messiah had appeared, even Jesus. Among those who heard was a devout woman. What was her name? What was her trade? Lydia requested Paul and his companions to make her house their home whilst they stayed at Philippi, preaching the Saviour who had become so precious to her. Lydia was received into union with the Church of Christ by baptism. (Acts xvi. 15.) Paul was imprisoned in Philippi, with one companion. What was his companion's name? The gaoler was converted. By what ordinance was the converted gaoler received into Christ's Church? (Acts xvi. 33.)

Infants received by baptism into the Church of Christ.—There was no need that the Apostles should be specially directed to include the children of believing parents when they administered baptism. Infants had been, by circumcision, thus publicly acknowledged as belonging to God for many centuries. On the day Abraham was circumcised, little Isaac was also circumcised. But it was very likely that in the inspired account of the Apostles' labours there would be some casual reference to the baptism of children. So we find in the New Testament. We have just mentioned two persons who were baptized when they believed. In the case of both there is reference to their households. So our Missionaries act. They will not baptise adult heathens, Mohammedans, or Jews, unless they believe on Jesus. But, when parents have been baptized, their little children may also be thus consecrated to God.

Exercises.—What is the appointed method of reception into Christ's Church? Will baptism make an impenitent sinner into a true Christian? How old was Isaac when he was circumcised? May baptized parents present their infants to God in baptism?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

The Converted Slave-Dealer.

John Newton was born in 1725. His mother was a good woman, and a member of a dissenting church. Her religion was intelligent and attractive, and her influence on John, her only child, was like sunshine on a flower. She stored his memory with Divine truth from Scripture, hymns, and catechisms. Many were the prayers she offered, and the tears she shed,

on his behalf. But, to John's great loss, his good mother died when he was in his seventh year. His training afterwards was exceedingly defective. He became very ungodly, and the slave of hurtful vices. After a time he went to sea. Partly from the unkindness of others, but chiefly from his own wickedness and folly, he was brought into great sufferings and misery. For some time he was in captivity, and his bondage was of the most wretched kind. He escaped, however, at length. Afterwards he became a slave-trader, and was engaged in taking poor negroes from Africa to the slave-markets. During this period of his life he was led captive by the devil at his will. Divers lusts triumphed over him. He knew what was right, but did not do it. He knew how awful was the punishment awaiting him; yet had no moral power to break away from his sins. He never would have been delivered had it not been for the grace of God. He was, however, converted. Then it was easy and pleasant for him to do the Lord's will. He, eventually, became a clergyman, and was enabled to lead many sinners to Christ. When more than eighty years old, he still endeavoured to make known his Saviour. When a friend advised him to rest, because of his extreme age, Mr. Newton replied: "I cannot stop. What! shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak?" (No. II. *April* 12.)

A New-Zealand Carriage.

The carriage had no wheels. It was itself carried. As, however, it was employed for conveying a person to chapel, it might be called a carriage. Each one can please himself as to what other name it shall be distinguished by. You could not call it a coach or omnibus, a chariot or brougham, a Bath-chair or sedan-chair. Thus it originated. In the year 1831, a young New-Zealander wanted to be baptized; he had heard from the Missionaries that he was a sinner, and that Christ was a great Saviour. He had found his way to Jesus, and had been made happy in His pardoning mercy. He now loved Jesus, and wished to acknowledge his discipleship publicly, and in the way appointed by Christ. But the young man was too feeble to walk, and he was so ill, that he did not expect ever to become strong enough to get to chapel. He might have been baptized at home; but most of his countrymen were, at that time, wretched idolaters, and the young man wished to show them that he was not ashamed of Jesus. So some natives, who loved Jesus, nailed some boards together, and placed the young man thereupon, and then raised him shoulder-height, and carried him to chapel one Sunday forenoon. He was baptized by the name of "John." On the same day, in the evening, he received the other sacrament, that of the Lord's Supper. It was the first and last time that he partook of the memorials of his Saviour's dying love. During the night he passed away to that land where there is no sickness nor pain. The sacraments had, however, proved channels of grace to the soul of the dying New-Zealander; and he had thus honoured his Divine Lord, into whose glorious presence he was so soon after admitted. (No. II. *April* 19.)

Old Gungajeet.

A poor old man, in India, was one day very tired with travelling. He was going from place to place begging. The Hindu religion attaches some degree of sacredness to the character of such beggars as the one we speak of. His name was Gungajeet. He was, however, much wearied, and knew not where to go to for food and shelter. He passed a building in which were several of his countrymen; he entered, that he might rest. A Missionary was preaching. The poor old man heard, for the first time, concerning the Saviour. He began to look to Jesus for salvation. The Lord so far blessed him, that Gungajeet resolved that he would at once carry the good news from village to village. He felt sure that everybody would be pleased to hear it. He first returned to the place from which he came; the people had, however, before he arrived, heard of his conversion. Without listening to anything he had to say, they threw the feeble and aged man on the ground, dragged him by his legs, on his back, through the village, and then said: "Go, and never show us your face again." He had a wife, and a little son and daughter; and also a mother, very aged; none of these would so much as see him. But Gungajeet bore all patiently. He was publicly baptized in the name of the Triune God, and grace was given to him according to his need. His wife, some years afterwards, died of cholera; but there was hope in her death. His son and daughter bid fair to be devoted servants of Christ. Gungajeet, with almost his latest breath, declared: "My Saviour is with me. He is my Rock." The poor Hindu mendicant had confessed Christ, and was blessedly sustained by Him, both in life and death. (No. II. *April* 26.)

Joseph of Kaffirland.

An afflicted Kaffir had heard that the pale-faced strangers were very clever in curing diseases. He had been very ill for

a long time; so he was glad to go to the Mission station for medicine. The Missionary was enabled to relieve him greatly; but the poor Kaffir obtained that which was still more valuable. His soul was saved. He was baptized by the name of Joseph. Some of his countrymen threatened to kill him if he persisted in going after these strangers; but Joseph found the grace of God to be sufficient, and replied: "If you take all I have, and kill my body, I must save my soul, for I have heard the Word of God." He once said, "a man cannot say he is converted merely because he has been baptized." A short time before he died he was heard to say, in prayer, "Lord, Thou comest to fetch me: O, stop close to me!" Great were the privileges attained by this converted Kaffir. The Lord, whom he acknowledged, sustained him in peace until He took him home. (No. II. *May* 3.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

April 5.—The Hungry Fed.

MARK vi. 42: "And they did all eat, and were filled."

1. *Seeking Jesus.*—Jesus wished to take His disciples to a quiet place apart from the busy town. So they crossed the Sea of Galilee "by ship," on their way to the green hills on the other side. Many people saw them going, and at once set off to go there too; a "great multitude," — men, and women, and children. They had not boats or ships, but ran afoot round the shores of the Lake, and got there so as to meet Jesus when He came out of the ship. Why were they so anxious to be near Him? Because He was so wise and kind. There had been no teacher or prophet like Him. They knew, too, of His wonderful miracles; how He ever used His great power for the good and happiness of all about Him.

2. *The compassion of Jesus.*—He was full of pity when He saw these multitudes of people. They seemed as "sheep without a shepherd." He knew they had none to teach or guide them. They had come far from their homes to see and hear Him, and "He began to teach them many things." As evening came on they were faint and hungry. They had had no food all day, and none could be got there; for it was a "desert place." The disciples wished to "send them away," for they had only "five loaves and two fishes," and they said, "What are these among so many?" But Jesus bade them all sit down, and they sat in ranks upon the green grass. Then He took the loaves and fishes, and after giving thanks, He brake them, and gave to His disciples, and they gave to the multitude. But had they enough for so many? Yes, "they did all eat, and were filled," and they took up of the fragments which were left "twelve baskets full," more than they had at the beginning. How was this? Because Jesus made it sufficient. Could any man have done this? No, but Jesus was the Son of God. Then He sent the multitudes away, full of wonder at His power, and compassion, and love.

3. *Lessons from the Miracle.*—(1.) Jesus cares for the wants of our bodies. He gives the parents and friends who love you the means by which you are fed, and clothed, and cared for. (2.) Jesus blessed God, and gave thanks for the food; and though He could make as much food as He pleased, yet He would have nothing wasted. Are you careful to keep from waste? Do you thank Him for daily food, and for all mercies? (3.) Jesus has food for the soul. He taught the people who came to hear Him. He gives His Word and Spirit for our salvation. Without this the soul would starve and perish for ever. It is a blessed thing to hunger for the "bread of life." Will you go to Jesus and ask to be fed?

REVISION.—Why did the people go to Jesus? Where did they find Him? How did He feel when He saw them? What did He do for them? What was the miracle He wrought? What lessons does it teach?

April 12.—Death Conquered.

1 COR. XV. 20: "Now is Christ risen from the dead."

1. *Easter-tide.* — This time of the year is set apart to keep in mind the rising of our Lord from the dead. Do you remember why Jesus died, and how? While He was alive he had said that He should be put to death, and that He would rise again. Those wicked men who crucified Him, said

that His disciples might come and take His body from the tomb, and say that He had risen. So they rolled a great stone against the mouth of His grave, sealed it, and set a guard of soldiers round, to keep it safe. But neither death nor the grave, nor the malice of wicked men could keep Him there. On the third day He rose again, and for many days was upon the earth, and was seen of many who heard His voice, and were with Him, and knew surely that He was indeed alive again. In due time He ascended up into heaven.

2. *A time of sorrow.*—When Jesus died His disciples were very sad. It seemed as though all their hope was gone, and all their trust in Him of no good. And after He had gone up to heaven, and they could no longer see Him, many were full of sadness, and feared that when their friends died they should never see them again; and that for themselves there would be no life beyond the grave. But this Word was written to comfort and to cheer them and us. It is ever a sad and solemn thing to die; to leave our friends and all that is dear and pleasant in life; and to those who have no hope in Christ, it is indeed full of dread. Yet there is,—

3. *A time of joy.*—For "the dead shall be raised." How do we know that? Because Christ has broken the power of death. He died for our sakes, but death could not keep Him. The soul can never die, and even the body shall live again. For as Christ raised His own body from the dead, so will He, at the last day, raise all, for "in Christ shall all be made alive;" then the "last enemy," that is "death, shall be destroyed." Nothing but the love of Christ can take away the fear of death, for none but He can save from "the second death." How then shall we prepare for death?

REVISION.—Why did Jesus die? When did He rise again? What does His rising from the dead show us? What makes death dreadful? What can take away its fear? How do we know that we shall rise again?

April 19.—**A Command for Children.**

MARK vii. 10: "Honour thy father and thy mother."

1. *The command.* — These are the words of God. When He came down upon Mount Sinai and called Moses up to Him, to tell him what He wished His people to do, He gave him two flat tables of stone, on which were written the "Ten Commandments." These were the chief and most important things which the people were to remember and obey. This was one of these commands: "Honour thy father and thy mother." These same words, or others like them, are found in different parts of the Bible. For Moses, just before his death, and long afterwards, Solomon, and Paul, and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, repeated them. From all this we may know how important a command this is for children.

2. *What it means.*—It means *to obey.* No child honours his parents who does not obey them. But it means more than obey. Some obey for fear of punishment, though they do it not *willingly.* Others obey only when it is *pleasant* to do so, or when they hope to get some reward for it; but this is *selfish.* And even obeying without fear or selfishness, if that be all, is not *honouring.* How do men pay honour to others? By doing with great care what they know or think will please them; by acting so as to show that they think them better than themselves; by ever speaking of them with respect, and striving to make others also respect them. This may show us,—

3. *How the command should be kept.*—By cheerful and willing obedience to parents "in all things," small as well as great, pleasant as well as unpleasant. By parents being served and cared for in word and deed, with tenderness and love. By a desire to find out and do what will be pleasing to them. By their being thought and spoken of with respect and love, in their *absence* as well as when they are present. Is not this often forgotten? Now all this will bring God's blessing in this life, for "this is well pleasing unto the Lord." What promise has He given for those who obey this command? It will bring great happiness now, and comfort all through life. Try to name some of those spoken of in the Bible, who honoured, or who dishonoured, their father, and think of what each way led to.

REVISION.—Who gave this command? when? and to whom? Why is it said so many times in the Bible? What is it to honour? How should we honour our parents? Why should we do so? What blessing does it bring?

April 26.—The River turned to Blood.

Exodus vii. 24: "They could not drink of the water of the river."

1. *The proud king.*—We have heard in former Lessons of the sad state in which the people of Israel dwelt in Egypt; how their bondage was so bitter that God, to deliver them, sent Moses to bring them out of the land. They were in the power of the cruel king Pharaoh. Moses went with God's message to him, saying, "Let My people go." But Pharaoh was proud and sinful, and refused to do this. He trusted in his strength; for he had a great army of strong and brave warriors, and he ruled over a kingdom rich and large. So he would not obey the word of the Lord. This is just what many sinners do now: they harden their hearts against God's commandments. They do not know, or they do not care for, His great power, and His anger against sin.

2. *The river turned to blood.*—When Moses gave his message, Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord?" To teach him this, and to show that He was greater than the gods of Egypt, God gave Moses power to work many wonderful miracles before the king. A grand and noble river flows through the land of Egypt. It gives water for drinking, fish for food, and it made the land bring forth corn and fruits in great plenty. Without it, Egypt would be a barren desert, for there is little or no rain there, as in our land. This river was of so great a value, that the people worshipped it as a god. They did not know THE LORD who made the river and the earth through which it flowed, and all that was around them. So when Pharaoh would not hearken, God told Moses to stretch his rod over this river, and it was in a moment changed into blood. Here was a great and dreadful plague: the fish died, the river itself stank, and the Egyptians loathed to drink of the waters of their beautiful river. Yet Pharaoh still would not let the people go, and we shall hear of many troubles which his sin brought afterwards upon the land.

3. *The great evil of sin.*—How strong and evil sin is. How dreadful the punishments are which it brings. Who can tell the power of God's anger? Yet sin is in every heart. God's word comes to you, will you refuse to hearken to His voice? Will you not give up sin, and give Him your heart?

REVISION.—Why was Moses sent to Pharaoh? What message did he take? What did Pharaoh say? Why would he not let the people go? Why was the river turned to blood? What does this teach us about sin? How may sin be destroyed in us?

DAY-SCHOOL AFFAIRS AND WORK.

WHY A SCHOOL DID NOT PROSPER.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—

WILL you insert a letter in your periodical? I can say better what I want to say in this form, and, perhaps, its novelty may gain a perusal from those who would turn hastily away from a regularly constructed article.

My object, in writing, is to give you the narrative of a personal experience. A certain day-school was held in a good building, and was provided with ample apparatus. The funds of the school were sufficient, but its reputation was low, and the reports of the Inspector grew less and less favourable every year. I determined to visit it for myself. Remembering the saying of a certain admiral, whom I had once found inspecting the dormitories of an educational institution at seven o'clock in the morning, that he "never went to see any place on show days, or when visiters were expected," I went to the school at five minutes past nine, A.M. The gates were closed. A small, disorderly mob was gathered round, and reported, with some glee, that the master was not come, and no one could see him coming.

Finding that I was too early, I waited till later in the day, and then saw, or fancied I saw, the secret of the poor reputation of the school. The disorder

that confronted a visiter was pitiable. I am not very fastidious on this question, and should not visit very heavily the occurrence of a little outburst of laughter, some quick sally of juvenile mischief in the way of sly pinch or sharp push; but I found very dirty faces, and very sloppy lavatories, torn cards, broken windows, slate frames and tattered books lying here and there, on desks and in window-sills. The master carried, I thought significantly, a nondescript thing, half-pointer, half-cane. His pupil-teacher, when I suddenly opened the class-room door, was branishing a similar instrument, to the awe, not to use a stronger word, of his portion of the scholars. The copy-books were blotted, and a mistake in the first line was perpetuated, without note or comment, till the last. I further observed that the slates of the arithmetic-class would sometimes, in the course of the lesson, all agree, but all be wrong; a plain proof of defective *morale*. The playground was rarely overlooked by the master; between whom and pupils there appeared an amount of distrust, rising in the case of the elder boys into surly defiance. The Bible-lessons were curtailed; all extra subjects were abandoned, because, as the master assured me, they "did not pay at the examination."

In vain I suggested the experience of educationists on the folly of circumscribing the curriculum under the vain pretence of perfecting common subjects. I saw I was regarded with suspicion, and, therefore, withdrew. My fears, as to the approaching official examination, were not groundless; for the managers told me that a large portion of the grant was withheld that year. Whose fault was this? The teacher's, will be the ready reply. But let us see how the case really stood. First, then, he was put down amongst an ignorant and very depraved population. He had to work in an usually uncongenial soil. He sank under the oppression of the place. He was a more than fair scholar, a very close student, and had entered on his work, as he frankly confessed, with very high hopes of success. From all that I could gather, his first and fatal failure was in the religious element. His work no longer appeared to him as a "working together with God" for the early training and ultimate salvation of souls, but it was a matter of pure worldly gain. His ideal lowered, and he saw nothing before him but troublesome children, whom he must endure for so many hours of the day, and so many months of the year, but whom he would then dismiss. Having fallen to this low level, everything became dull, commonplace, uninteresting; and the conclusion of the whole matter was that his duty was left undone, and many injured. I do not suppose that there are many cases in which so complete a failure has occurred; but, having put this case on my note-book, some eighteen months ago, I thought you might find a place for its warnings in your columns.

All interested in our day-schools should recognise the religious element as that which lifts them above secular schools; not only in virtue of the difference of the things taught, but also of the higher spirit in which they are inculcated. Teachers, especially, will understand me when I say, that, understood in my sense, the loss of spirituality is the most serious disaster they can sustain. Supposing that it does not end in those temporal evils we have here described, it must leave them far below the highest point their profession can reach.

Apologising for the length of my epistle, and hoping that some time you may allow space for reversing the picture,

I am, my dear Mr. Editor,

Yours very truly,

N. E.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

Sunday-School Items.

MADELEY.—Mr. John Fletcher (secretary) reports the erection of a class-room, during the year, for the accommodation of senior scholars. Number of scholars, 170; increase on the year, 40. Teachers, 29; of whom 20 are in Society.

KENDAL.—At the last annual meeting the chair was occupied by Mr. W. Thompson, who for more than forty years has been connected with the school. The Report stated that during the year many of the elder scholars had given evidence of a work of Divine grace in their hearts; out of 200 scholars, 30 are either members of Society, or on trial.

Examination of Pupil-Teachers in Religious Knowledge: Hull District.

A CENTRAL EXAMINATION was conducted by the Rev. J. W. Silcox (District Secretary) and the Rev. F. C. Haime, in the Adelaide-street school-rooms, Hull, on Saturday, March 7th. Thirty-one pupil-teachers were in attendance from the Hull, (Adelaide-street, and Scott-street,) Grimsby, Barton-on-Humber, Beverley, and Howden schools. A substantial dinner, followed by coffee, was provided at two o'clock, at which the pupil-teachers were joined by forty visiters, being Ministers, teachers, and school-managers from various parts of the district.

At a meeting held afterwards, the Rev. W. Williams (Chairman of the District) presided. Some school-music, excellently given, enlivened the proceedings. Mr. Jackson, of the Barton school, read a paper on "A proposed Scheme of National Education;" and Mr. Whiteley, of Grimsby, read another on "How best to teach Geography." In the conversation which ensued, part was taken by the Chairman, Rev. J. Parkes, Rev. G. O. Bate, Thomas Holmes, Esq., Mr. Tombleson, jun., Mr. Tomlinson, Messrs. Reynard, Spensley, Saunders, and others. At the close of the proceedings, which were interesting and profitable, several teachers and pupil-teachers remained to partake of tea provided by the teachers of the Adelaide-street schools.

The Sunday-Scholars' Present to the Princess of Wales.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES has been graciously pleased to accept a Bible presented to her by the Sunday-school children of Great Britain and Ireland. Her Royal Highness's state of health not allowing her to receive a deputation, Mr. H. N. Goulty, the originator of the movement, (who was introduced by Lord Harris,) presented the Bible, with an address, to which her Royal Highness returned the following answer:—"I accept the very beautiful Bible which you present to me with, I hope, a full appreciation of the sentiments you express concerning its inestimable value as the Word of God. I am very sensible of the exertions which you have made to supply me with this proof of your interest in my welfare, and of your loyalty to the throne. I offer you my very sincere acknowledgments, and will only add that the gratification with which I receive your present is enhanced, when I regard it as a token of the Christian union subsisting between those who have joined together to give it to me." The schools uniting in the subscription numbered 1,514; 1,238 English, 146 Scotch, and 130 Irish. In regard to the religious communities to which they are severally attached, the English schools are thus classified:—Church of England, 546; Independents, 166; Baptist, 123; Wesleyan, 95; Primitive Methodist, 23; United Presbyterian, 8; Jews, 3, unclassed, 274.

Christian Vernacular Education Society for India.

THE object of this Society is to promote Elementary Christian instruction among the population of India, through the medium of *their own languages*. The empire has a population of one hundred and eighty millions of inhabitants, which includes thirty millions of school-going children, between the age of five and fourteen years; speaking, independently of dialects, fourteen distinct languages, each as different from the other as German is from English, or French from Spanish. Upon this vast field the Society pursues three main lines of work:—

1*st*. *In relation to the indigenous heathen schools, and the supplying them with Christian teachers, and an improved school-apparatus.*—The main features of this branch of the work are these:—

"To supply religious instruction to a *selected* circle of schools, where the native masters are willing that it shall be given, through means of native Christian teachers, in the Bengali language. The heathen masters are required to use the Society's school-books. In all cases they are bound to open their schools for inspection and examination to the native Christian teachers, or any Missionary or

gentleman who may act as superintendent. The equivalent offered to those heathen masters, who thus submit their schools to the guidance and control of the Society's agents, is a small capitation-fee; and, in addition, a bonus for every boy who reaches a fixed standard at a half-yearly examination.

"It has been estimated, by competent authorities, that there are not fewer than thirty thousand heathen schools in Bengal. Every village of any consequence has its school. These are chiefly hereditary institutions. They not unfrequently pass from father to son for a series of generations. The native teachers, called Gurumohashoys, regard their schools as their patrimony, and eke out of them a bare and somewhat precarious subsistence. Their remuneration consists partly of small sums of money, a few pice a month for a child; or, in the case of the poorer villages, they receive, from time to time, small presents of rice or fruit. They thus contrive to live as their fathers lived before them. They are poor, but their immediate wants are supplied; and they are generally contented with their position. They are not without a degree of honour: the people respect them, and trust them, and feel them to be necessary adjuncts of their village-economy.

"The character of the instruction imparted in these schools is, as a rule, despicable in the extreme. In the majority of them the only book used is a stupid story-book, full of idolatry and uncleanness. Amazingly ignorant himself, the ordinary Gurumohashoy aims at nothing higher in his teaching than to impart to his pupils an ability to scrawl their names on leaves, to spell out with difficulty a simple reading-lesson, and to bawl out, at the top of their voices, certain tables of arithmetic. As regards the moral tone of these schools, it is necessarily of a low and degraded character. Kali, Siva, and Krishna are presented to the children as the objects of reverence and imitation. Can it be a matter of wonder, under such circumstances, that the grossest darkness, intellectual and moral, should cover, like a deathlike pall, the masses of the people?"

2d. *In relation to Missionary schools, and the purpose of training native schoolmasters, especially Christians, for the use of the Mission-field in the rural districts of India.*—Upwards of one hundred students have already been sent forth to the Missionary field, properly trained in the art of teaching, and one hundred and forty remain in the institutions preparing for similar work.

3d. *In relation to the publication of Christian school-books, and other educational literature, in the vernacular languages of India.*

"Before the commencement of the Society's operations, in some of the languages not a single Christian school-book existed of any description. A teacher without books is like a workman without tools; ability to read is of no avail, if good books are lacking to convey instruction. The school-books published by the Society supply interesting and instructive reading, leavened throughout with Christian truth. The Society has issued two hundred and fifty publications, in fourteen languages. The number of copies of these printed amount to about two millions and a half. The school-books are used more or less all over India, in the schools of twenty Missionary Societies; thus contributing in an important degree to mould the character of the future native Church. They are used to some extent in schools supported by the natives themselves, and by private individuals in their families. Illustrated monthly magazines, full of sound secular instruction upon many popular subjects, and permeated with Divine truth, are published in four of the principal languages. The best school-books published in Europe and America have been examined, and the information thus acquired has been used in the new series just published. These school-books have also been illustrated with excellent woodcuts. In order to aid the Society now engaged in the important work of promoting female education, a reading-book has been specially prepared for schools and Zenana-teaching, and will be published in all the principal languages of India. The committee have opened fifty book depôts, in the most important cities of India, for the sale of the Society's publications. Colporteurs carry them to the great heathen festivals. All are sold at low prices, not one being given gratuitously. This helps to secure their being read and valued."—*Abridged from "Christian Work."*

Certificate Class List. Wesleyan Training College. Government Examination, Christmas, 1867.

THE list containing the results of the last Christmas examination was received from the Committee of Council on the 21st of February. The results, as a whole, must be regarded as very satisfactory. The students are examined in four distinct groups, consisting of males and females of the first and second year, respectively. On some former years it has happened that one or another of these groups has been more highly rated than any one of them this year; but in no former year has the standard of success been so uniformly high. This is, probably, in part, to be ascribed to the improved arrangements which the recent additions to the College have rendered practicable.

[The letter D denotes that a Drawing certificate has been obtained; the double asterisk (**) denotes that the mark "excellent" has been gained for drawing, and the single asterisk (*) "good."]

MALE STUDENTS.

SECOND YEAR.

First Division.—*Bowden, Charles; *Brooksbank, James; *Cowham, Joseph H.; **Jenkinson, Jabez (D); **Kerry, James (D); **Nicholson, John J.; **Sedgwick, George (D); **Talbot, Arthur G. (D.)

Second Division.—Baldwin, Thomas (D); **Barber, Elijah; *Binns, James H.; *Blocksidge, Joseph; *Burgham, Edwin J.; **Clarke, Thomas; *Fortune, Joseph; **Gutteridge, John D.; **Hinchsliff, John (D); *Johnson, Benjamin; **King, George E.; *Leech, Jonah; Leitch, Thomas H. D.; *Palmer, William;

*Shellard, Albert E.; *Ward, Thomas A.; *Whitham, Joseph S.; **Woodward, James.

Third Division. — * Bielby, Matthew; **Fawkes, William H.; **Fifoot, Charles A. (D); **Harding, Edwin J.; *Keyworth, Edwin; King, Thomas C. (D); **Mackney, Henry; **Robson, Enoch; **Shackleton, John.

FIRST YEAR.

First Division. — ** Elsom, Albert (D); **Jackson, Francis; **Newbitt, Thomas (D); *Nicholls, William A.; *Parrott, Thomas; **Robinson, Martin; *Senior, William C.; *White, Albert S.; *Wood, John G.

Second Division.—*Allen, Henry R.; *Barker, John; *Barker, William B.; *Chadwick, Samuel; *Foster, Samuel G.; **Goudie, William; *Mansell, John; *Plowman, Allan H.; Rickard, Jose; *Ridge, William L.; **Schofield, Joshua W.; *Soulby, Charles; *Stokes, James; **Thornton, John; *Wells, William G.; *Webster, Abner; *Worsley, Samuel.

Third Division. — Britton, Samuel F.; Brookes, Edwin; Iddon, James; Odery, Joseph.

FEMALE STUDENTS.

SECOND YEAR.

First Division.—*Andress, Selina; *Burn, Mary; *Davies, Rosetta; *Fielding, Emma J.; *Flint, Emily; **Hewitt, Margaret (D); *Kaye, Zillah M.; *M'Lean, Marion C.; *M'Clenahen, Isabella; **Nicholson, Emma; *Sutton, Amelia; **Tolchard, Louisa; Williams, Ann M.

Second Division.—*Birtwell, Martha; *Baldock, Jane; *Butcher, Eliza A.; *Bardin, Matilda; *Collings, Alice; *Farr, Emily M.; *Ham, Martha A.; Huggins, Harriet D.; *Peed, Ellen; * Quick, Willmot; * Smith, Eliza; *Sheldon, Sarah R.; Taylor, Jane; *Wedlock, Susannah; *Wilson, Mary A.

Third Division.—*Veall, Elizabeth J.

FIRST YEAR.

First Division.—*Austin, Mary A.; **Baggott, Mary; *Davies, Jane M.; *Pace, Selina L.; Thornley, Alice J.; *Taylor, Alice.

Second Division.—Easton, Jane; **Fawkes, Maria; *Finch, Sarah A; *Grace, Emma; *Granger, Caroline; Hanesworth, Margaret E.; *Johnson, Charlotte; *Johnson, Sarah; *Parry, Catharine; **Reid, Agnes; Trevellick, Matilda.

Third Division.—*Clapham, Jane; **Duxbury, Mary A.; Eames, Sarah J.; Grundy, Margaret; *Heginbottom, Hannah; Hawes, Jane; Handford, Sophia; Johnson, Amy N.; ** Kaye, Lydia H.; ** Lambert, Adeline; Plenty, Millicent; Thornbury, Ann.

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

55. The Benjamites were remarkable for their use of the left hand. (Judges iii. 15; xx. 15, 16; 1 Chron. xii. 2.)

56. The tribe of Dan had the fewest families before entering Canaan. (Num. xxvi. 42, 43.)

57. Augustus is mentioned in Luke ii. 1; Tiberius in Luke iii. 1.; and Claudius in Acts xviii. 2.

58. While Paul laboured among the Corinthians he obtained his livelihood by tent-making. (Acts xviii. 3.)

59. By comparing Gen. xxv. 20, xxi. 5, and xxv. 7, we find that Abraham lived thirty-five years after the marriage of Isaac.

60. The word "many" in Acts xiii. 31, is used instead of "forty." (Acts i. 3.)

W.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

EMMA WALKER.

A LITTLE manuscript lies before me. It possesses a peculiar interest; for it records the inner history of a dear little girl, who has been taken from her family-circle, and her class in the Sunday-school, to a higher companionship,—to join those happy spirits who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

The little MS. presents a difficulty. It is very simple and childlike; but it is also very disconnected. Lines and sentences follow one another, full of meaning in themselves, but having no apparent links. It is as if a baby-hand had strung on the same necklace, shells of the seashore, corals, and precious stones.

For instance—

"'Tis only noble to be good."

"Simple, ignorant of ill,
Innocent and happy still."

"I should very much like to be at my Father's right hand at the day of Judgment."

Some unconnectedness can scarcely be wondered at, considering that the first notes were written when my little friend was only ten years of age; and at thirteen she closed the book, and

laid her down on that feverish couch from which she was never permitted to rise. Another explanation also presents itself: she was such a diligent and appreciative reader, so desirous to *educate herself* in "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report," that I believe when a golden precept or noble maxim came under her notice, she immediately wrote it down, in order that it might be more safely garnered. With these, also, are to be found petitions as deep and earnest as they are childlike; almost startling, at times, in the strength of their aspirations after holiness, and their confessions of sin and want.

Emma Walker was born at Belby, near Howden, September 18th, 1853. I first became acquainted with her in January, 1866, when I was appointed to assist in teaching the Girls' First Bible-class in the Howden Sunday-school.

This was a most interesting class, and for the position assigned me in it I was scarcely equal. I soon found that I had inquiring minds to instruct, and seeking spirits to lead. With two or three exceptions, all the girls were serious. Some of them were truly converted, and were consistently endeavouring to show those around them that they had put on Christ: among these was Emma Walker.

She was naturally of a retiring disposition, and I had little knowledge of her, but what might be drawn by inference from her outward deportment, and gentle, refined manners. When the names in the class-register were called over, Emma was never heard contending for her place. She would rather have resigned it; for, if she did not feel herself above such foolish disputes, she knew that the little handmaid of the Lord "must not strive." Her lessons she frequently prepared beforehand, by a careful study of Wesley's notes. Her mother assures me that she devoted a great part of the Saturday (her weekly holiday) to preparation for the Sabbath-school; and it was a bitter disappointment to her when, because of the weather, or her own delicate health, she was not permitted to attend.

There are some scholars whom teachers never like to miss, whose presence in the class is an encouragement. I need not hesitate to say that many an afternoon, when overpowered with the heat, or distracted by the high-pitched voices from the other side of the school-room, Emma's face, so full of interest and attention, so anxious for information, has been the means of stimulating me, and putting fresh life and energy into my teaching. Her answers to questions put, showed her intelligence to be beyond her years: there was something remarkable, too, in the seriousness with which they were given. Unless addressed personally, she invariably gave place to others; and that sharpness and flippancy of reply, so characteristic of some scholars, was utterly foreign to her.

Thoughts of another world, of the solemn purposes of life and the need of a Saviour, seem to have engaged her mind from earliest childhood. At ten years of age we find her, from the foot of a secret Sinai, tremblingly looking to Calvary. Deep distress and dark despair, at this time, troubled her; but that there were alternations of hope, and glimmerings of faith, may be gathered from these her first entries in her manuscript:—

"Feed me with the bread of heaven."

"They that seek the Lord, seek not in vain."

The following verse is supposed to be her own composition. Her friends state that it was written on the same night that she was enabled to venture her soul upon Christ, and received the witness of His Spirit in her heart:—

"I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For, if I stay away, I know
I shall for ever die."

Blessed be God! in that He put a new song into the mouth of this little child. Her happiness is thus recorded on the next page:—

"My Jesus to know, and feel His blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below."

Again,

"To the cross, Thine altar, bind
Me with the cords of love."

A little Thanksgiving for daily mercies is also worthy of record:—

"O Lord God of our salvation, from whom all good things do come, we bless Thee

for the mercies of the past day. Thou daily pourest Thy benefits upon us; Thou givest us all things richly to enjoy,—the blessings of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

The sense of reconciliation with an offended Father, of interest in the blood of an atoning Saviour, was not all that the ardent spirit of this child of grace desired. Here are prayers so simple, that I almost fear to insert them, lest they should be amusing to some people; but they are breathings of desire after holiness, longings for the hidden manna, worthy of a mature Christian:—

"O Father, my soul is very hungry: I am dying for something to eat: Thou only canst satisfy me. Thou hast said that Thou wilt feed the hungry.—Help me to 'put on the whole armour of God.'—I want a new heart:—

'A heart from sin set free;
A heart that always feels Thy blood,
So freely spilt for (sinners such as) me!'

"Whosoever drinketh of the waters of this world shall thirst again,—Lord, give me the *heavenly* waters, that I may not thirst again."

Then follows the parable of the Fig-tree, literally copied, and commented on thus:—

"This parable applies to us as well as to the Jews. We are all put into the vineyard of the Lord; and we can do both good and evil. O Lord, help me to do good! I should not like it to be said of me, that I cumber the ground."

"Remember all the dying pains
That my Redeemer felt;
And let His blood wash out my stains,
And answer for my guilt.

"Christ's dear blood, and righteousness,
Be to me as jewels given;
Crowning me, when I shall pass
Onward through the gates of heaven."

The little MS. closes thus:—

"And music fills the balmy air,—
. . . . . .
Harps of gold, and mansions fair,
O, so bright!"

How "bright," she was soon to realize.

In September, 1866, I left Howden, and took leave of my scholars with deep regret, "sorrowing most of all," lest I should see them no more. When an opportunity of revisiting the place presented itself, I again took my seat in my old class; but there were several faces missing.

In February, 1867, Howden was visited by fever. Many fell victims, and among them were Emma and two other Sunday scholars. I trust it may be said that they all died "in the Lord." From Emma's last illness little can be gathered: such a life, however, is testimony sufficient. From the time she sickened, her mind became beclouded; and only once or twice did she show signs of consciousness. In one of these short periods she requested her sister to read to her the third chapter of St. John's Gospel.

A day or two before her death she fixed her eyes on a corner of the room, and said, "I am coming very soon." They were, I believe, the last words she uttered. She died on the 9th of March, 1867, aged thirteen years.

There is much that is lovely and worthy of imitation in the character of this little girl; but how could it be otherwise, when her mind was so early and fully yielded to the influences of the Holy Spirit?

Her religious earnestness sanctified and stimulated desires for excellence in secular pursuits and studies. Though painfully sensitive to reproof, she was most anxious that her faults should be corrected. Some one, aware of the affection the day-school master entertained for her, said, "You must feel very happy in being his pupil!" "Yes," she replied; "but I had rather be under Mr. C——." "Would you? Why?" "Because he was so much stricter with me," was the answer. Every one will admit, that to deprecate indulgence is a rare trait in a child.

May her memory be cherished by those girls who walked with her on earth; and be made the means of stimulating and encouraging those of them who are yet undecided, to give their hearts to God.

Is there not in this biography much to impress Sabbath-school teachers with the importance of their work? How different are the minds with which they have to do! The prepared ground, the thorny, and the barren lay before them. Side by side may stand the totally careless, and the penitent seeker; and it is their duty to ascertain the spiritual requirements

of each, and to adapt their instructions accordingly. And "Who is sufficient for these things?"

I believed my little friend to be a follower of Christ, but I was little aware of the sacred hunger and thirst after righteousness which prompted these simple but earnest prayers. Let us not, then, too lightly estimate our Sabbath-school ministry. Before "the Good Shepherd" gave Peter the commission, "Feed my Lambs," He first asked him, "Lovest thou Me?" Let us search well our hearts, and see to it that we also are able to respond, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Let us beseech Him, in all simplicity, as He suffers "the children," so to "suffer" us. Rather than make haste to teach, let us first learn our lessons at His feet, awaiting there fresh baptisms of love. Let us also be watchful, lest we should in any way negative our teaching, offend one of these little ones, or put a stumbling-block in the way of tender feet feebly endeavouring to tread the narrow path.

J. S. C. I.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

Early Life of Gnats.

M. Maurice Gerard, Vice-President of the French Entomological Society, in his "Métamorphoses des Insectes," says: The gnats which we see playing by myriads over rivers or ponds in the last rays of the departing sun, need only to be closely watched to see the females, one after another, alighting on the surface of some floating body, or even of the water itself, and there laying a long train of eggs, ending in points at both extremities, and gradually growing in bulk towards the middle. This raft of eggs is left to the care of the waves and the genial warmth of the sun; and in the course of two days, curious little larvæ make their appearance, in the shape of minute fish, with a long and transparent body, a big head, and black eyes. They haunt stagnant water, get into watering-casks, and other receptacles of the kind. If the water be stirred, or disturbed in any way, they will fly off in all directions, skipping about with great agility. They have no legs, but short hairy antennæ, with which they row about. The last ring of their body carries a tube, by means of which they breathe. In the course of about three weeks this larva casts its skin three or four times. The dorsal region of the thorax protrudes out of the water; the skin shrivels up and splits open, and through the aperture the larva makes its escape, leaving the old skin floating on the surface. The last metamorphosis is radical,—there is a complete change of form: the thorax is broad, and puffed up with air; the abdomen is bent double, and provided with flaps, which enable the creature to swim about. The nymph, thus transformed, rises to the surface of the water, unfolds its tail, and its thorax then swells, and splits open between the two respiratory horns with which it is provided. The skin of the nymph now becomes a sort of skiff, in the centre of which we perceive the head of the full-grown gnat, which soon rises up vertically like a mast. The tiny craft turns and turns in the breeze without filling or capsizing. The legs and wings now become unfolded: the former find a footing on the water, and the latter are spread out as sails, to catch the soft breeze, which is to waft the little mariner to the bank; but any violent gust will infallibly consign him to an untimely grave.

"Whosoever" and "Whatsoever."

Whosoever and whatsoever are two precious words often found upon the lips of Christ. "*Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely." "*Whatsoever* ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." "Whosoever," is on the outside of the gate, and lets in all who choose. "Whatsoever," is on the inside, and gives those who enter, the free range of all the region and treasury of grace. "Whosoever," makes salvation *free;* "whatsoever," makes it *full.*

Blind People in London.

There are 2,638 blind persons in London, and the institutions do not contain 400 of these. There are at this time the names and addresses of 500 of them on the books of the Home-Teaching Society for the Blind, who are visited, week by week, by means of eight Christian men and women employed to teach them to read, and to supply them with books gratuitously. Most of these are in the depths of depressing poverty.

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

MARCH 29.—Afternoon Lesson.

"The Lord my rock."—Psalm xviii. 1—31.

For repetition, verses 1—3.

Summary.—With a few variations, this Psalm is also found in 2 Sam. xxii.; which see. It was written by David to celebrate his peaceable possession of the kingdom of Judah and Israel after the many troublous adventures, perils, and wars of his earlier life. Some think that David used it only in private for a time, but at length gave it "to the chief musician," for the service of the Temple, to be used as a public song of praise to God for His sovereign strength and righteousness. It is also held to be a prophecy of the Messiah.

I. David's Declaration.—V. 1—3. *I will love*,—"with the most passionate and ardent affection." *My strength*,—"who hast given me power over my adversaries." V. 2 clearly alludes to those strongholds and lurking-places, steep hills and precipitous rocks, which afforded David the means of hiding and escape from Saul; and it teaches that he would not say of these, though valuable, but of *the Lord*, He *is my Deliverer*. See heading of the Psalm. *Buckler*,—shield, which covers my head and my heart. *Horn*,—emblem of dignified strength. *High tower*,—for watch as well as ward. V. 3. "Praising, *I will call*," &c. *So*, &c.—For the voice of prayer, breathing the spirit of praise, is highly pleasing to God.

II. His Danger and Distress.—V. 4—6. *Sorrows*,—"cords." See Margin, v. 5; in 2 Sam. xxii. 5, the "breakers of death," a metaphor from dangerous waves. V. 5. *Compassed*,—alluding to the custom of surrounding the prey in hunting. *Floods*,—numbers of wicked men. *The snares of death prevented*, or, "overtook," *me*.—"I had no more power to help myself than a dead man bound hand and foot in his grave; so suddenly was I entangled in their deadly snares," 1 Sam. xxiii. 26. V. 6. *In my distress*,—extremity of helplessness. *Called..and cried*,—as one needing immediate and mighty succour. *He heard*,—though "so infinitely above us in His heavenly palace." *Into His ears*,—the voice of my complaint being so strong, and His ear so ready to hearken, Isai. lvii. 15.

III. The Majesty of his Deliverer.—V. 7—19. Vv. 7—14 "are, probably, a figurative representation, highly poetical, to signify that the deliverance of David was the effect of the Divine power miraculously exerted. The language and imagery are borrowed from a tremendous thunderstorm, which is considered as manifesting Jehovah's wrath. Some think such a tempest might actually have occurred during some engagement." V. 8. *Smoke out of His nostrils*.—"The ancients spoke of the seat of anger as being in the *nose*, or nostrils; because, when the passions are warm and violent, it discovers itself by the heated, vehement breath which proceeds from them." V. 10. *Upon a cherub..yea.. upon the wings*, &c. "Cherub,"—the name of an angel; but here, probably, it "is a personification of creation." *Darkness..His pavilion*,—"covering," or hiding-place, Deut. iv. 11; Ps. xcvii. 2. V. 12. *Brightness*,—lightning, the flash of which is followed by pealing thunder; then the *thick clouds* pass, discharging hail and rain. V. 14. *Arrows*,—or forked lightnings. *Discomfited*,—confounded, or troubled, Exod. xiv. 24. V. 15 alludes to the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 21, 22; xv. 8. *At the blast*, &c.,—at "the fierce breath of the wind of Thine anger." V. 16. *Many*, or, "great" *waters*,—the symbol of sudden and great calamities. V. 18. *Prevented*,—planned stratagems to surprise me. *The Lord was my stay*,—He was "too

strong" for them, as they also were for me, v. 17. *Large place*,—a state of liberty, repose, and security, instead of the peril and straitness of hiding-places. *Delighted in me*,—for the reason given in the following verses.

IV. Reward according to Righteousness.—V. 20—31. V. 20—24 explain why the Lord delighted in, and delivered, him. *My righteousness*,—i.e. *cleanness of my hands*,—keeping God's *ways*, proving faithful to Him, v. 21: respecting His decrees, not shunning His commandments, v. 22: being honest of heart with Him, 1 Kings xiv. 8; and carefully guarding against the sin I am prone to. V. 25, 26 teach that God will deal with men according to their own disposition; that His dealings with them will correspond with their conduct; and that the righteous judgments of God will sooner or later overtake the man who is himself *froward*, or perverse, Lev. xxvi. 23, 24; Matt. xxv. 24. V. 27. *Afflicted*,—humble sufferers in contrast with proud evildoers with *high looks*, Prov. vi. 16, 17. V. 28. *For*,—I am an instance of this. *Thou*,—"makest my lamp clear." "The shining of the lamp is an image of prosperity." V. 29. "By Thy aid I have broken through troops; through my God I have scaled ramparts."—*Boothroyd.* V. 30. *Tried*,—Margin, "refined." V. 31. *For who is God, who is a Rock*, &c.,—at once a foundation of hope, a fortress against evil, and a fountain of goodness and grace.

Reflections.—1. *Ardent love to God naturally prompts us to pray to Him in time of need.*—A loving child runs to his father or mother for safety; a Christian calls upon God his Father.

2. *Often prayer is our only refuge.*—There are many afflictions in which the help of man is vain. In such instances how blessed it is to have confidence that God will hear us when we call.

3. *Strong confidence in God is itself a tower of strength to us in the day of calamity.*

4. *How glorious must God Himself be when His manifestations in nature and providence are so grand and terrible.*

5. *We should "have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."*—Then, when men persecute, God will protect us.

Questions.—On what occasion was this Psalm written? What did David say the Lord was to Him? What else? To what did he allude in using these terms? What did he blend with his prayer? Was the distress of David great? How does he describe it? How did God come to his help? What does the description remind you of? Why did God thus deliver His servant? v. 20. How is David's righteousness described? How does God deal with men generally? v. 25. Why do the wicked think hardly of Him?

Illustration.—"floods of ungodly men."

See v. 4. "Dreadful and unexpected calamities were frequently represented under the image of overwhelming waters. It seems to have been peculiar to the Hebrews; for they had continually before their eyes the overflowing of Jordan, from the melting of the snows of Libanus and other mountains swelling the river on the approach of summer. The mountainous character of the country rendered other parts liable to numerous torrents, rushing down through the narrow valleys."—*Lowth.*

APRIL 5.—Morning Lesson.

THE COVENANT ESTABLISHED.—Exodus vi. 1—13.

For repetition, verses 2, 3.

Summary. — Repeating His threats against Pharaoh, God reminds Moses of His covenant with Abraham; and, under the sublime name of Jehovah, establishes that covenant with the Israelites, the seed of Abraham, declaring that He will bring them forth and make them His peculiar people. Broken with their grievous tasks, the people have no heart to listen to Moses. This discourages him, but the Lord renews his commission.

I. The Covenant of Jehovah.—V. 1—8. *Then the Lord said*,—in answer

to the complaint of Moses, ch. v. 22, 23. *Now*,—have patience and confidence in My sovereign power. *What I will do*,—even all I have resolved to do, ch. iii. 19—22. *Shall he drive them out*,—so terribly will I scourge him, that he shall be glad to be rid of them, ch. xi. 1; xii. 31—33, 39. V. 2, 3. *The Lord*,—"JEHOVAH,"—the most lofty name of God: the Jews held it so sacred, that they would never pronounce it; but called it the unspeakable name of four letters. It means *Existence*, and teaches that the BEING of God is Absolute, Independent, Self-existent, Supreme. *God Almighty*.—The Hebrew name is EL-SHADDAI, Gen. xvii. 1. *Was I not known*.—The name JEHOVAH was used by God to Abraham, Gen. xv. 6, 7; but was not known in its full force and significance; especially in relation to this covenant with Abraham and his seed He had only *proved* Himself to be God Almighty, or All-sufficient to perform its promises. Now the time for fulfilment had come, and He would attach a sublime significance to the name JEHOVAH by giving BEING to, or accomplishing, His promises. To know God by His name JEHOVAH was to witness such a display of His power and glory as should be a practical illustration of its meaning. V. 4. *Established*,—by repeatedly declaring My purposes. *Of their pilgrimage*,—Gen. xvii. 8; xxviii. 4. V. 5. *Remembered*,—that it is to the children of Israel, as being the seed of Abraham. V. 6. *Wherefore say*, &c.—"I will now show that I am what this name imports." *I will bring you out*, &c.,—as the first actual proof to you that I am JEHOVAH. *Great judgments*,—by inflicting punishment according to Gen. xv. 14. V. 7. *I will take you*, &c.—The second declaration, by an act, of what Jehovah is, Gen. xvii. 6, 7. V. 8. *Bring you in unto the land*, &c.—The third practical illustration of the power and glory of Jehovah, Gen. xvii. 8. Thus each part of the promise is particularly repeated, and to each is affixed the seal of His Being, Faithfulness, and Power: I AM JEHOVAH. V. 8. *Swear*, (Margin, "lift up My hand,")—the ancient method of taking an oath.

II. DISCOURAGEMENT THROUGH OPPRESSION.—V. 9—13. *Spake so*,—told them all God had told him. *Anguish*,—"shortness" of breath: they had no heart to listen, or hope, for the coming of Moses had made their afflictions heavier, ch. v. 6—9, 19. V. 12. *Moses spake*,—in reply to the command, v. 11. Those whom I have come to deliver will not hearken; is it likely their oppressor will? *Uncircumcised lips*.—See Illustration. V. 13. *Gave them a charge*,—a strict and solemn injunction to go and do what He had commanded, leaving results to Him.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *In God's instructions to Moses what an instance we have of His condescension and long-suffering!*—See the last two verses of the preceding chapter, and v. 1. He does not chide Moses, or the people, but simply says to Moses, "Now shalt thou see what I will do!" So God deals with them that fear Him, Ps. ciii. 13.

2. *Neither the lapse nor the changes of time affect God's purpose or promises*.—It would seem a long time to Moses and the Israelites since God declared His will to Abraham; and, probably, their view of the promise would be dim, and their faith in its execution feeble; but the time which seemed so long to them was as nothing to God, 2 Peter iii. 8, 9.

3. *God reveals His character to us by His works*.—The greatest of these is Redemption, and in this His glorious nature is most richly displayed. In their deliverance from Egyptian bondage the Israelites read the wonders of the "ineffable name" Jehovah as the Patriarchs had never done; and in our redemption from sin we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as they never saw it, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

4. *Simple obedience to God is our duty, whatever difficulty may lie in the way*.—It was natural that the Israelites should feel distressed, and for Moses to be discouraged; yet Moses should have more fully considered the sovereign power of JEHOVAH, then he would have rendered more prompt obedience. When God speaks, it is not for us to reason about difficulties, but to do what He bids.

QUESTIONS.—How did God say Pharaoh would let the people go? By what name was God known to Abraham? By what name was He now to be known to Israel? What is the meaning of the word "Jehovah?" In what way was He about to reveal the glory of

Jehovah to the people? What was to be the first display of this glory? What the second? What the third? How did the Israelites now listen to Moses? Why was this? Why did Moses now hesitate to go to Pharaoh? What did God give him?

Illustration.—"UNCIRCUMCISED LIPS."

See v. 12. "His being of *uncircumcised lips* signifies no more than that Moses was an ill speaker, and wanted eloquence: it being the manner of the Hebrews to call those parts '*uncircumcised*' which are inept (unsuitable) to the use for which they were designed, and cannot do their office. Thus Jeremy saith of the Jews, that their 'ear was uncircumcised;' and adds the explication, 'they cannot hearken,' Jer. vi. 10. In like manner *uncircumcised lips* are lips that cannot utter words; as 'uncircumcised in heart' (Jer. ix. 26) are such as cannot understand. St. Stephen puts both together, 'uncircumcised in heart and ears,' Acts vii. 51."—*Patrick.*

APRIL 5.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE MULTITUDE FED. — Mark vi. 30 — 56.

SUMMARY.—The Apostles return from their labours, and tell Jesus of their success. He takes them apart to rest awhile; but the people see them going, and reach the same place by another way. Jesus instructs them; at eventide the disciples wish to send them away, but Christ feeds them there. Afterwards the disciples put to sea, and Jesus remains alone. A storm arises, during which He walks on the sea, and then stills the tempest. He heals many in the land of Gennesaret.

I. RETREAT AND PURSUIT.—V. 30—33. *Gathered together*,—those whom He had sent out "two and two," v. 7. *What they had done*,—v. 13. *Had taught*,—v. 12; Luke ix. 6. *A desert place*,—across the Sea of Galilee from Capernaum, where they might hope to be free from interruption, *for there were*, &c. V. 32. *By ship*,—across a corner of the sea. *Privately*,—hoping that their departure, or, at least, their course, would not be noticed. V. 33. *Ran afoot*,—round the sea-coast. *All cities*,—on that side of the sea. *Outwent*,—arrived at the place before them, knowing it to be one to which Jesus resorted.

II. HUMAN WANT AND DIVINE SUPPLY. — V. 34—44. *Came out*,—of the ship. *With compassion*,—seeing the eagerness of the people to be taught, and knowing the incompetency of their professed teachers. *Many things*,—concerning Himself and kingdom, Luke ix. 11. V. 35. *Far spent*.—It was late in the evening, see Matt. xiv. 15. *A desert*.—It was on the north-east coast of the Sea of Galilee, near to Bethsaida, Luke ix. 10. V. 37. *Shall we go?* &c.—They were amazed at the idea of feeding all that multitude in such a place, for they were but ill-provided for themselves, v. 38. *Two hundred pennyworth*.—See Margin. About the value of six pounds five shillings of our money; more than they could raise among them. V. 38. *Have ye?*—Can ye furnish on the spot? *Five, and two fishes*.—See John vi. 8, 9. *Commanded them*,—the disciples. *In ranks*, &c.—"In squares, behind one another, like the beds of a garden, as the word signifies, *by hundreds, and by fifties;* so that they could be thus most conveniently served, and accurately counted."—*R. Watson.* V. 41. *And blessed*,—or gave thanks to God, John vi. 11. This was not merely in observance of a pious custom, but in devout recognition of His Almighty Father who had given Him these works to do: He did the same at the grave of Lazarus, John xi. 41, 42. *Gave to His disciples*,—who were thus made the dispensers of His bounty; a type of the duty awaiting them as His Apostles. *They did all eat*,—"the marvellous multiplication taking place, as many affirm, first in the Saviour's own hands, next in those of the Apostles, and lastly in the hands of the eaters. This may have been so; at all events, it was in such a manner that they *were filled*."—*Trench.* V. 43. *Twelve baskets*,—"commonly used on journeys for carrying provisions;" these, probably, belonged to the Apostles. *Full of the fragments*, or broken pieces, which must "have immensely exceeded in bulk and quantity the original stock." V. 44. *Five thousand men*,—fed to the full with five loaves and two fishes!

Who but God could have done this? See Reflection 3.

III. Human Weakness and Divine Strength.—V. 45—56. *Constrained*,—the disciples being unwilling to leave Him, because they hoped He was about to set up a kingdom, John vi. 15. *Bethsaida*, —on the west coast of the sea, near Capernaum, not the place mentioned above. V. 46. *A mountain*,—the mountain on which, or near to which, He had fed the people. *To pray*.—If Jesus thus prayed to His Father, how deeply should we feel our dependence on God. V. 48. *He saw them*, —although it was quite dark. *Contrary*, —blew away from the shore they were trying to reach. *Fourth watch*.—The last of *the night*; so it was getting toward morning. V. 49. *Walking*, &c. —As no mere man ever did. V. 50. *Troubled*,—v. 49. *It is I*.—What a relief to their fears! V. 51. *Wind ceased*.—Another wonder, there being no natural sign to explain it. V. 52. *Considered not*,—did not keep in mind to support their faith in Him. *Hardened*,—slow to receive conviction; yet compare Matt. xiv. 33. V. 53. *Land of Gennesaret*.—"A small district of Galilee, about six miles in length, south of Capernaum."

Reflections.—1. *The eagerness of the people to be with, and to hear, Jesus, is very pleasing*.—They recognised His pity for their necessities, v. 34. We should be as eager to hear Him as they, for we have as much need.

2. *Jesus teaches them first, and feeds them afterwards*.—He cares for the body, but for the soul much more. Which do we care for most?

3. *The fact of this miracle is too plain to be denied*.—First, there is the place, *a desert*; then, the small quantity of food at hand carefully ascertained; then, the number of men, counted to a nicety by the way in which they were made to sit down; and, lastly, the quantity of fragments left. Jesus invited attention to the conditions of the miracle. How unlike those who *pretend* to work miracles, John vi. 14.

4. *God uses man as the means of blessing to his fellow-man*.—Jesus could have fed the multitude without the disciples, but He chose to employ them. Should not we desire the honour of being employed by Him?

5. *This lesson impressively teaches us the Divine benevolence and bounty to man in his hour of need*.—The people are eager for instruction, and Jesus teaches them; they are hungry, He feeds them; the disciples are affrighted in a storm, He stills it, and comforts them; and He heals many sick in the land of Gennesaret.

Questions.—Where did Jesus go with the disciples? Why? What did the people do? What did Jesus say about them? What did He teach them? What did the disciples wish should be done with them in the evening? What did Jesus say? How many were fed? With how much? What was left? What does this prove? Where did Jesus send His disciples afterwards? Where did He go? What happened toward morning? Into what land did they come? What did He do there?

Illustration.—the desert of bethsaida.

See v. 35, and Luke ix. 10. "'Bethsaida' is the eastern city of that name, which, from the importance of the new city Julias, built there by Philip the Tetrarch, would give its name to the surrounding desert tract. The 'desert place' was either one of the green table-lands visible from the hills on the western side, or, more probably, part of the rich plain at the mouth of the Jordan. In the parts of this plain not cultivated by the hand of man would be found the 'much green grass,' still fresh in the spring of the year, when this event occurred, before it had faded away in the summer sun; the tall green grass, which, broken down by the feet of the thousands there gathered together, would make as it were 'couches' for them to recline upon. This Bethsaida must be carefully distinguished from 'Bethsaida of Galilee,' John xii. 21."—*Stanley*.

APRIL 12.—Morning Lesson.

"he is risen."—Mark xvi.

Summary.—Once a year is not too often to think specially of the resurrection of Christ; so the Lessons of to-day invite us to visit the sepulchre again, and refresh our minds with the facts and mysteries connected with it. The title of this Lesson is a blessed angelic declaration, which "the women" proved to be true; the

two disciples going to Emmaus; and then the eleven, whom Jesus first reproved for their unbelief, and then commissioned to go and preach the Gospel everywhere, promising to give them signs of His presence and Divine power. After this He ascended to heaven.

I. GOING TO ANOINT HIM.—V. 1—4. *The Sabbath was past*,—closing at sunset. *Early in the morning* after, when the sun was about to rise, (v. 2,) Matt. xxviii. 1. *Had bought*,—on the day before the Sabbath, Luke xxiii. 56. *Sweet spices*,—"aromatics, substances used in embalming." *Anoint*,—embalm *Him*, having no doubt that He was dead. V. 2. *First day*,—our Sunday; the Jews' Sabbath was on Saturday, the seventh day. V. 3. *Who shall?* &c.—It was too heavy for their strength, for it was *very great*, v. 4. *Was rolled away*,—by the angel, Matt. xxviii. 2.

II. A GLORIOUS APPEARANCE AND MESSAGE.—V. 5—8. *They saw*,—what a surprise it would be! *A young man*,—"a style of appearance appropriate to angels." *A long white garment*.—See Matt. xxviii. 3. V. 6. *Jesus of Nazareth*,—the term of reproach given by the Jews is known to the angel. *He is risen*.—What a joyful announcement! *Behold!*—You can judge for yourselves. He is not *where they laid* Him. V. 7. *And*—especially—*Peter*,—who denied Him, but had repented bitterly. *As He said*, ch. xiv. 28. V. 8. *Any thing to any* person on their way. *For*, &c.—"Trembling of body and amazement of mind" unsettled them.

III. SEVERAL APPEARANCES OF JESUS.—V. 9—14. *First to Mary Magdalene*,—"at the sepulchre," John xx. 11—17. *Out of whom*, &c.—So that Mary in herself was a striking instance of His Divine power, Luke viii. 2. V. 10. *Told them*,—the disciples, John xx. 18. V. 11. *Believed not*,—so far were they from any thought of imposition. V. 12. *In another form*,—in disguise, so that they might not recognise Him by His appearance. See the full account, Luke xxiv. 13—32. V. 13. *Residue*,—the rest. *Neither believed*, &c.—So settled was their despondency. V. 14. *Afterward*,—since nothing else would convince them. *Sat*, &c.,—"reclining at their meals." *Upbraided*,—rebuked them, deeming the proofs given sufficient to produce conviction. *With their unbelief*, &c.,—obstinate unwillingness to receive evidence, and a hardened state of heart, which ill became them.

IV. COMMISSION AND ASCENSION.—V. 15—20. *Every creature*,—explanatory of "all nations" in Matt. xxviii. 19. V. 16. *He that believeth*,—"with his heart," Rom. x. 9, 10. *Damned*,—condemned by God, and punished, 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. V. 17. *Signs*,—of God's authority and presence. *In My name*,—but not otherwise. *Cast out devils*,—as the disciples had done, ch. vi. 13. *New tongues*,—other languages than their own, Acts ii. 8. V. 18. *Take up serpents*,—as Paul did. Acts xxviii. 3—5. *Deadly thing*,—poison, which would cause death. *Lay hands*, &c.—Acts iii. 6, 7; v. 15. V. 19. *On the right hand*.—To denote the dignity and power to which He was exalted. V. 20. See Illustration.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *These women were persuaded of the death of Christ, and had no hope of His resurrection*.—The certainty that He died is necessary to the *fact* of His resurrection; and this is attested by foes as well as by friends.

2. *The way in which Jesus showed Himself to the two disciples was designed to impress them deeply with the truth that it was He*.—Had He merely passed by them in His own form, they would have said they had seen "His angel."

3. *Miraculous gifts were necessary to the introduction of Christianity*.—Now that it has become established, these are not needed, and therefore are not granted.

QUESTIONS.—When did the women go to the sepulchre? What were they going to do? Whom did they see? What did he say? Whom were they to tell? To whom did Jesus show Himself first? Who next saw Him? Who next? What did He rebuke them for? What did He command them? What did He promise? Where did He go? Did He fulfil His promise?

Illustration.—"THE LORD WORKING WITH THEM."

See v. 20. "Which refers to the secret influences of His grace, 'giving the increase' to the seed they sowed, and to the shoots they planted. This *co-operation* of Christ with His servants, in their employment of 'preaching everywhere,' is therefore

distinguished from His 'confirming the word with signs following;' that is, proving the Divine original, and, therefore, truth, of their doctrine, by the miracles by which it was followed. They proposed the doctrine, and then the miracle became the sign and seal of its divinity."—*R. Watson.*

APRIL 12.—Afternoon Lesson.

"THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT."—1 Corinthians xv. 1—28.

For repetition, verses 24, 25.

SUMMARY.—St. Paul's object, in this chapter, is to prove the doctrine of the general resurrection, of which Christ's is the promise and pledge. He, therefore, begins by establishing the truth of the latter, showing it to be the doctrine which he had always preached, and they all believed. Then, having pointed out the consequences of a denial of it, he triumphantly declares both the resurrection of Jesus and the certainty of His ultimate and universal victory over death.

I. THE DOCTRINE PREACHED AND BELIEVED.—V. 1—11. *I declare*,—most definitely and impressively. *Ye stand*,—as the one only foundation of your faith and hope. V. 2. *Keep in memory*,—Margin, "hold fast;" i.e., with steadfast faith and obedience. *Unless*,—it shall turn out that the doctrine was false. V. 3. *First of all*,—as prime, vital, saving truth. *I also received*,—from the Lord Himself, Gal. i. 11, 12. *According to the Scriptures*,—the Old-Testament writings. See especially Isai. liii. V. 4. *Was buried*,—a proof that everybody believed Him dead. V. 5. *Was seen of Cephas*,—Peter; to whom a special message was sent. See this Morning's Lesson: and also John xxi. *The twelve*,—as it was common to call them, though correctly they were only eleven. V. 6. *Above five hundred*,—probably in Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 7, 16. *Remain*,—alive. *Fallen asleep*,—are dead. V. 7. *After that*,—again, John xxi. 1. V. 8. *Last of all*, &c.—After all these had seen Him, &c., Acts ix. 3—6. *Out of due time*,—long after all the rest, as if out of season; an expression of humility explained by v. 9. *Because I persecuted*,—which none of the others had done. V. 10. *By the grace*,—infinite mercy and longsuffering, 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. *What I am.*—A true believer in Christ, and a zealous Apostle. *More abundantly*,—"from a deep sense of the peculiar love God had shown me." *Yet*,—I take no praise to myself. V. 11. *Or they*,—the other Apostles: we have taught the same doctrines, and you have *believed* them.

II. "IF CHRIST BE NOT RISEN," WHAT THEN?—V. 12—19. *Be preached*,—so as to be believed. *No resurrection*,—that such an event is impossible. If this be so, what I have said (v. 1—11) is false. What follows from this? V. 14. *Our preaching*,—which Christ ordained *after* His resurrection; *and your faith*,—the fruit of preaching, your freedom from sin, v. 17; the happy, hopeful death of your friends, v. 18; *are vain*. And we are base deceivers of you and the world. But what are the facts? See Reflection 3. V. 19. *If*,—we Christians can look for nothing more than we get in this world, "bonds, imprisonments, and deaths." *Miserable*,—of all men most to be pitied.

III. "CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS" AND THE VICTOR.—V. 20—28. *But now*, &c.—A triumphant declaration and challenge. *Firstfruits.*—See Illustration. V. 21. Explained by v. 22. *All die*,—the death of the body. *Made alive*,—raised from that death. V. 23. *Own order*,—time, place, rank. *Christ*,—first in dignity, and pledge of the rest. *Christ's*,—the dead in Christ. *At His coming*,—the second time, Matt. xxv. 31. V. 24. *The end*,—the full accomplishment of the purpose of Christ's reign as God-man and Mediator; its last triumph, its crowning glory, v. 26. *Delivered up*,—as He had received, Dan. vii. 13, 14; John v. 24—29. V. 25. Compare Ps. cx. 1; Acts ii. 34, 35; Heb. i. 13; x. 12, 13. V. 27, 28. See Afternoon Lesson for February 9. V. 28. *The Son, also, Himself*,—"shall resign His mediatorial office to the Father." *That God*,—as GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may reign supreme.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *When the Apostle wrote, the doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus could, if false, have been disproved.*—See v. 6. Many were willing enough to prove it false, if they could have done so. That they *did* not, is a proof that they *could* not.

2. *A doctrine of revelation, especially when it is illustrated and proved by an event which has become a* FACT *of history, is not to be set aside because it seems to men impossible.*

3. *The first successes and present vigour of Scriptural Christianity are evidences of the truth of Christ's resurrection.*—St. Paul says, "if Christ be not raised," all is vain. But he feels that he is speaking against facts; and seems to say, "But I am an Apostle; you, happy, hopeful believers in Christ. Will those who deny the resurrection of Christ in any other way explain our existence and experience as Christians? They cannot deny our presence, though they deny our explanation of it." So we may say now: "*Christianity lives;* we trace it to the resurrection of Christ; to what it proves respecting His Divinity; and the events that followed. If men deny this explanation, how will they solve the mystery of the rise and growth of our holy religion?"

QUESTIONS.—Of whom did Paul receive what he preached? What did he preach? What else? What Scriptures supported him in preaching? To whom did Jesus show Himself "last of all?" What did Paul say of himself? Why? What follows from supposing Christ is not risen? But is it "vain?" What has Christ become? v. 20. What consolation have we against the prospect of death? What is the last enemy Christ will destroy? To whom will He give up His kingdom? Why?

Illustration.—"THE FIRSTFRUITS."

See v. 20. "The firstfruits, or first sheaf of ripe grain, was required to be offered to the Lord, and was waved before Him by the priest, as expressing the sense of gratitude by the husbandman, and his recognition of the fact that God had a right to all that he had, Lev. xxiii. 10—14. The word, therefore, comes to have two senses, or to involve two ideas: (1) That which is *first*, the beginning, or that which has the priority of time; and (2) that which is a part and portion of the whole which is to follow, and which is the earnest or pledge of that; as the first sheaf of ripe grain was not only the *first* in order of time, but was the earnest, or pledge, of the entire harvest which was soon to succeed. In allusion to this Paul uses the word here."—*Barnes.*

APRIL 19.—MORNING LESSON.

THE TWO BROTHERS AND PHARAOH.—Exodus vi. 26—30; vii. 1—13.

(*For repetition*, chapter vii. 3—5.)

SUMMARY.—The family of Moses and Aaron having been pointed out, so that in after times there should be no mistake about the persons of the deliverers of Israel, they are again instructed by God how to treat with Pharaoh, and what will be the result. They pay their first visit to the King, and Aaron's rod is turned into a serpent; but the magicians do likewise, and Pharaoh's heart is hardened.

I. MEDIUMS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOD AND PHARAOH.—Ch. vi. 26—30; vii. 1—7. *That Aaron and Moses,*—repeated at the close of v. 27, but in inverse order: Aaron being the older, is first in the genealogy; but Moses takes precedence, "as being the Divinely-appointed rescuer of Israel." *According to their armies,*—"not by a disorderly flight," but "organized as an army," vii. 4; xii. 41, 51. V. 28. *On the day,*—at the time; not any particular day. V. 29, 30. See Morning Lesson for April 5.—Ch. vii. 1. *A god to Pharaoh,*—having Divine authority and instruction to execute judgment upon him for his obstinacy, and effectually to subdue his pride. *Thy prophet.*—Here, and in v. 2, the line of communication is laid down: God will make known His will to Moses, Moses to Aaron, Aaron to Pharaoh. V. 3. *I will harden.*—See Illustration. V. 4. *Not hearken unto you,* &c.—His perverseness will prove an opportunity for the display of My power, in wonders and judgments gradually increasing in terror. V. 5. *Shall know.*—I will increase their punishment till they confess *that I am the Lord.*

II. SECOND INTERVIEW AND FIRST SIGN.—V. 8—13. *Show a miracle,*—give

me a proof that you are sent by the God of the Hebrews. *Take thy rod,*—it was called "the rod of God," ch. iv. 20; and indifferently the rod of Moses or Aaron. V. 10. *Became a serpent.*—Verifying God's promise, ch. iv. 3—5. V. 11. *Wise,*—cunning *men. Sorcerers,*—"derived from a word signifying, 'to delude the sight with false appearances.'" *Magicians,*—"men that, by evil arts, performed amazing things," as Simon Magus and Elymas, Acts viii. 9—11; xiii. 8; see, also, 2 Tim. iii. 8. *Enchantments,*—by fires, smoke, burning incense, secret whisperings, mutterings, &c. V. 12. *Became serpents,*—seemed to become, as Josephus says, or did really become, (by the intervention of Divine power,) as some others think. *Swallowed up,* &c. —Whatever interpretation may be given to this, it was a sure sign to Pharaoh that his magicians would not be able to stand before Moses and Aaron; and the sign was honoured, ch. viii. 18, 19. V. 13. "Pharaoh's heart was hardened," v. 22.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Sometimes a younger brother is preferred in honour before an elder one: in such a case there should be no jealousy.*—Moses was younger than Aaron, yet Aaron takes the subordinate place, and they work together in harmony. So it should always be.

2. *A simple message ought to be enough to bring sinners to submission.*—Moses and Aaron had been in to make their request unto Pharaoh; but that only provoked him, ch. v. 1—5: now they show some sign of authority; but he does not yield, and he will suffer much before he does. So it is oftentimes with men. Let it not be so with us.

3. *All men must "know" God, sooner or later,* v. 5.—If they do not yield to His love, they must feel His terrible power.

4. *Pharaoh is not the only one who has sought to meet and mock the servants of God by magical tricks.*—There are men who still do it, though not precisely in the same way.

QUESTIONS.—Which was the older of the two brothers? Which was first in honour? What was Moses made to Pharaoh? What does that mean? What was Aaron to be to Moses? How old were they when they went in unto Pharaoh? What did Aaron do? For whom did Pharaoh call? What were they? What did they do? How? What became of their "rods?"

Illustration.—"I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH'S HEART."

See ch. vii. 3. "The hardening of Pharaoh is ascribed to God ten times in all, and that not merely as foreknown, or foretold, by Jehovah, but as caused and effected by Him. In the last five passages (ch. ix. 12; x. 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 8) it is invariably stated that 'JEHOVAH hardened Pharaoh's heart.' But it is also stated just as often that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, or made it 'heavy,' or 'firm,' ch. vii. 13, 22; viii. 15, 32; ix. 7. According to this the hardening of Pharaoh was quite as much his own act as the decree of God. . . Looked at from this side, the hardening was a fruit of sin, a consequence of that self-will, highmindedness, and pride which flow from sin."—KEIL *and* DELITSCH.

APRIL 19.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

"UNWASHEN" HANDS AND HEARTS.—Mark vii. 1—23.

SUMMARY.—Ever on the watch to find fault, the Pharisees complain that the disciples do not wash their hands before eating. In reply, Jesus charges them with making void the law of God by their tradition; and teaches that man is not defiled by eating with soiled hands, but by the unclean thoughts of his heart, breathing out in words, and expressing themselves in actions.

I. "DEFILED HANDS."—V. 1—4. *Came together,*—with a common, deliberate purpose to find fault. *They saw,*—with their own eyes; so there could be no dispute about the fact. V. 2. *Defiled,* (Margin, "common,")—soiled a little by attending to ordinary duties, but not absolutely needing to be washed before meals. V. 3. *For,*—their own conduct must, of course, be the measure of other peoples. *Oft,* (Margin, "diligently," &c.,)—this was *not* a matter of cleanliness, but superstition; for the custom was binding, whether the hands were clean or not. *Holding the tradition,* &c.—See Illustration. V. 4. *Wash,*—dip the hands in water, to wash them. *Cups,* &c.—See Margin. Everything used had to undergo some prescribed process: "the cups, pots,

and vessels were washed; the couches sprinkled."—*Wesley.*

II. Tradition of Men against the Word of God.—V. 5—13. *Walk,*—observe, or keep not. *Elders,*—our forefathers. V. 6. *He answered,*—"Why do ye," &c., Matt. xv. 3: you question them about a trifle, while you are guilty of a great sin. *Well hath Esaias,*—Isai. xxix. 13; always more anxious about external ceremonies than internal purity and truth. V. 7. *In vain,*—such *worship* will be without any blessing in return from Me, Isai. i. 12—15. *Doctrines,*—"commands of God binding on the conscience." *Commandments,*—ordinances of men, prudential sometimes, but never obligatory like the laws of God. V. 8. *Laying aside,*—as of no account. V. 9. *Full well ye reject,* &c.,—Margin, "frustrate." You do this thoroughly, even while professing to uphold the law. *Your own tradition,*—which is of much more consequence in your eyes. V. 10. *Moses said,*—by command of God, Exod. xx. 12; xxi. 17. V. 11. *Corban.*—A Hebrew word denoting *gift;* "a thing dedicated to the service of God, and therefore not to be appropriated to any other use." *By whatsoever,* &c.—This property, which you need, I have devoted to God; therefore I cannot help you. V. 12. *Ye suffer him,* &c.—Ye hold him free from all obligation to observe the fifth commandment, which is one of the most natural and sacred of all.

III. The People taught concerning Defilement.—V. 14—23. *All the people,*—who had been listening to His conversation with the Pharisees. *Hearken..and understand.*—Do not let the seeming piety or affected scrupulousness of these Pharisees deceive you. V. 15. *Nothing,*—eaten, though with unwashen hands. *Which come out,*—"of the heart," v. 21. V. 16. A saying used by the Saviour when desirous that what He said should be deeply pondered, Matt. xi. 15; Rev. ii. 7. V. 17. *Concerning the,*—meaning of the *parable. Without understanding,*—Must so simple a matter as this be explained to you? *Cannot defile,* &c.—It is not in the nature of food to corrupt a man's heart, or to make his soul impure, unless he eat and drink to excess; and then the sin is not in what is taken, but in his vicious appetite and want of control over it. V. 21—23. What a list of sins! As we see these things in the actions of men, how offensive they are! Yet our Lord says, before they are seen by us, they are in the heart, and seen by God: this is the very source of them all, *evil thoughts* fostered till unlawful desires become strong, and wicked determinations govern us without restraint. V. 22. *Wickedness,*—malice of thought and desire. *Deceit,*—"cheating in trade," or in other things. *An evil eye,*—"joy at the misfortunes of others." *Foolishness,*—not want of intellect, "but all kind of wild imaginations and extravagant passions."

Reflections.—1. *We had much better have hands soiled by honest toil, with clean hearts, than hearts black with sin, and fair hands.*

2. *Self-righteous people think what they do must be right, and measure others accordingly.*—Yet see what God says by Isaiah, i. 6, 7.

3. *The Word of God is the supreme rule of our faith and practice.*—We may respect the ordinances of men, and revere the opinions of our ancestors; but only that is binding on us which is taught in the Bible; and it is a sin to put what man says in the place of what God teaches.

4. *Nothing in true religion sanctions the neglect of home duties plainly taught,*—as v. 10.

5. *How carefully should we watch over our hearts, and how fervently pray that God would cleanse, and keep them clean!*

Questions.—What did the Pharisees find fault with? Why was this? v. 4. What authority did they quote? What is the true authority in religion? What did Jesus charge the Pharisees with? What did Isaiah say of them? Under what pretence were children "suffered" to neglect their parents? Was this right? What did Jesus say to the people? How did He explain this to the disciples? Where does sin begin? What should this teach us?

Illustration.—"the tradition of the elders."

See v. 3, 5. "The elders do not appear to have been any body or council of men, like the Sanhedrim; but learned men, who had made themselves notable as doctors, or expounders of laws and customs."—*R. Watson.*

APRIL 26.—Morning Lesson.

HELP ASKED AND GIVEN. — Mark vii. 24 — 37.

SUMMARY.—Jesus again seeks retirement in Tyre and Sidon; but a woman finds Him, and implores Him to heal her daughter. He does so, and then goes to the Sea of Galilee, where they bring to Him a deaf and dumb man, whom He heals, to the astonishment and joy of the people.

I. HELP ASKED FOR A YOUNG WOMAN BY HER MOTHER.—V. 24—30. *Tyre and Sidon.*—See Illustration. *Would have no man*, &c.—He not only sought retirement, but did not wish to give needless offence to the Jews by working miracles among people whom they called heathens. V. 25. *For.*—Wherever distress is felt, help will be eagerly sought. V. 26. *Greek*, (Margin, "Gentile,")—as all not Jews were called. *The devil*,—who "grievously" tormented her, Matt. xv. 22; which see, and following verses. *Let the children*,—"the house of Israel." V. 27. *Children's bread.*—The provision specially made for them to whom "I am sent." *Dogs*,—as the Jews called the Gentiles; the dog being an unclean animal. V. 28. *Yes, Lord; yet*, &c.—"I am content with the place, if Thou wilt give me the portion of the dog." V. 29. *For this*,—thy humility as well as thy earnestness and faith. *Laid upon the bed*,—very weak and faint, but perfectly "whole."

II. HELP ASKED FOR A MAN DEAF AND DUMB.—V. 31—37. *Decapolis.*—The name given to several towns on the sea-coast. V. 32. *They*,—his friends, or the people, out of compassion. V. 33. *Took him aside*, &c.,—departing altogether from His usual course. The several acts of Christ here recorded were doubtless intended to set forth the FACT of the miracle; since none of them, nor all of them together, could be considered of the least efficacy in working the cure. V. 34. *Ephphatha.*—A Syriac word. V. 35. *Straightway.*—Proving that the word of Christ had Divine power in it. V. 36. *Charged them*,—not being desirous that the fame of His works should provoke the Jews. V. 37. *Beyond measure.*—"Very abundantly." *All things well*,—in a manner worthy of His claims to be the Son of David, the King of Israel.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *This mother's love gave her courage to apply to Jesus; and her anxiety caused her to persevere.*—She had only one thought,—the cure of her daughter; and for that she would brave or endure anything. Who can weigh a mother's love? How we ought to prize it.

2. *God honours not any thing so much as faith in Him, and confidence in His loving purposes.*

QUESTIONS.—Where did Jesus go? Where is that? What was this woman called? Why? What did she want with Jesus? How did He treat her at first? Why did the Jews call other people "dogs?" What did the woman reply? What does this teach us about her? What was the matter with the man in Decapolis? How did Jesus cure him? What did He charge the people? Did they do as He said? What did they say about Him?

Illustration.—SYROPHŒNICIA.

See v. 24, 26. "Anciently the whole land, including Tyre and Sidon, was in the possession of the Canaanites, and called Canaan. The Phœnicians were descended from the Canaanites. The country, including Tyre and Sidon, was called Phœnicia, or Syrophœnicia. That country was taken by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and those cities, in the time of Christ, were Greek cities. This woman was, therefore, a Gentile, living under the Greek government, and probably speaking the Greek language."—*Barnes.*

APRIL 26.—Afternoon Lesson.

THE PLAGUE OF BLOOD AND OF FROGS.—Exodus vii. 14—25; viii. 1—14.

For repetition, chapter viii. 8—10.

SUMMARY.—Pharaoh is smitten until he seems to begin to yield, but again hardens his heart.

I. THE PLAGUE OF BLOOD.—Ch. vii. 14—25. V. 14. See Illustration of Morning Lesson for April 19. *He goeth unto*,

&c.,—not merely to bathe, but to present his daily worship to the Nile, which was an object of idolatrous homage among the Egyptians. V. 16. This demand was made *in the morning* after the first sign was showed, v. 15. V. 17. *I will smite with the rod*,—always the emblem of Divine authority, and the instrument of Divine terror. *To blood*,—which the Egyptians dreaded to touch. V. 18. *The fish*, &c.—So that this could not be the ordinary reddening of the water to which the Nile is subject periodically. *Loathe to drink.*—See Illustration. V. 19. *Streams*,—the Nile divided itself into seven branches, Isai. xi. 15. *Rivers*,—canals cut by art. *Ponds*,—digged, to hold rain-water. *Pools*,—places in gardens, &c., into which the waters were gathered. *Vessels of wood*, &c.,—used for filtering and cleansing, &c. V. 20. *In the sight*, &c.—So that Pharaoh might see there was no trickery or deception. V. 21. The warning was literally fulfilled. V. 23. *Set his heart*,—did not trouble to discriminate between what Moses had done and what the magicians had done. *Seven days*,—this plague lasted.

II. The Plague of Frogs.—Ch. viii. 1—14. V. 2. *With frogs.*—The Nile produced these naturally; but the miracle consisted in the sudden production of such countless numbers, and in the impulse given them to quit their usual places of resort and to cover the land. *Ovens*, &c.—This must have been fearful; for perhaps the Egyptians would rather have worshipped than eaten them. V. 7. *Did so.*—The imitation was much easier in this case. V. 8. *Entreat the Lord*, &c.—So the magicians could not remove the frogs, or Pharaoh would not have asked Moses. *Glory over me*, &c.—See Margin. Fix thy own time: then, when I pray, and not till then, shall the frogs depart. V. 13. *The frogs died out*,—when Moses cried unto the Lord; thus teaching that God was with him to remove as well as bring the plague.

Reflections.—1. *God is merciful even in His judgments: He forewarns men before He smites them.*—Ch. viii. 2. So He does with us, 2 Peter iii. 8, 9.

2. *The plague of blood was the most tempered with mercy of all the plagues; showing us that, even when God proceeds to judgment, He is "slow to anger."*—This plague robbed them of three chief pleasures: drinking of the Nile, bathing in it, and eating of its fish. Painful as this deprivation was, it was less than the evils that followed.

3. *How difficult it is to convince a man who is unwilling to be convinced!*—See Note on ch. vii. 23. Pharaoh must have had a secret suspicion that Moses was superior to the magicians; but his obstinacy made him blind. He is not alone; let us take care, John iii. 19, 20.

4. *Men may promise, under pressure, what they do not mean in their hearts to perform.*—See ch. viii. 8. How many vows have been made on a sick bed, and forgotten as soon as health has been restored!

Questions.—Where was Moses told to meet Pharaoh? when? Why did Pharaoh go to the river? What was Moses to do? Why would this be a terrible plague to the Egyptians? Why did not Pharaoh yield? How long did this plague last? What was the second plague? Where did the frogs come from? In what did the miracle consist? What did Pharaoh ask Moses to do? Why? When? Did God hear Moses? What does this teach?

Illustration.—The Water of the Nile.

See ch. vii. 18. "The water of Egypt," says the Abbe Mascrier, "is so delicious, that one would not wish the heat to be less, or to be delivered from the sensation of thirst. The Turks find it so exquisite, that they excite themselves to drink of it by eating salt. It is a common saying among them that, if Mohammed had drunk of it, he would have besought God that he might never die, in order to have had this continual gratification. When the Egyptians undertake the pilgrimage of Mecca, or go out of their country on any other account, they speak of nothing but the pleasure they shall have at their return in drinking of the waters of the Nile. There is no gratification to be compared to this; it surpasses, in their esteem, that of seeing their relations and families."

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THE

WESLEYAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

MORNING SUNSHINE; OR, WHENCE THE DIFFERENCE?

BY THE REV. DAVID J. WALLER.

GOD makes us indebted to the sun, not only for light, but also for life in its manifold and beautiful forms. In spring, when the face of the earth is renewed, he causes the wonderful putting forth of hidden life; and in summer, he ripens vegetation for the scythe and sickle. He is the great artist who adorns the earth with its marvellous beauty. Without his light the caterpillar could never burst its cocoon and become a butterfly, nor could the tadpole become a frog; and all the busy insect-tribes wait for his call to come forth. Health is dependent in various ways upon the light. All other things being equal, houses are more or less healthy according to their aspect with regard to the sun. Epidemics are decidedly more prevalent on the shady side of the street. Many diseases are traceable to deprivation of light. Hence the traveller, while admiring the indescribable grandeur and beauty of Alpine scenery, is often shocked by the appearance of disease the most revolting, and deformity the most pitiable, among the inhabitants. In the deep, dark gorges of the Swiss Valois, where the direct sunshine never reaches, idiocy of a most melancholy character prevails. How expressive and important then is the teaching of the Psalmist, that "the Lord God is a Sun." He is the Author of light, life, and beauty to the soul; and in His absence there must of necessity be darkness, deformity, and death.

But, valuable as all sunshine undoubtedly is, all is not equally so: that of the morning is more serviceable than that of the afternoon. The following circumstance drew my attention to this fact. In my garden were two plots, one on either side, which I planted with strawberries. Knowing how much depended upon cultivation, I had the ground properly prepared, and then procured the best shoots. Although the soil, the culture, and the plants were the same, from the first there was a great difference in the progress of the two beds. When spring came round, plenty of blossom appeared on the one, but very little on the other. Summer came; and the one yielded a fair crop of good, ripe fruit; but,

alas! the little blossom of the other had passed away, but left no fruit behind. I thought, "What can have made the difference?" The soil, the cultivation, the plants, the shelter, and even the quantity of sunshine were the same on each side; for upon one bed the sun shone till noon, and then, leaving it, shone upon the other till evening. The reason of the difference was this,—on the side where the blossom and fruit appeared, there was the advantage of the morning's sun; and on the other side, there was only the afternoon's and evening's sun.

Is there not a lesson in this? As in nature, so is it in grace; and those who manifest the greatest beauty of character, and bring forth "much fruit," so that our Heavenly Father is "glorified," are such as, in the morning of life, have the advantage of the rays of the "Sun of Righteousness." Joseph, Samuel, David, Timothy, and other illustrious Scripture characters were so blessed. Nearly all the Ministers of the Gospel, and also the members of the Church, who have been eminently distinguished for their piety and usefulness, have had the advantage of the morning's sun. If the midday of life be past before Christ shines upon us "with healing in His wings," it is little fruit we can then bear for Him; but, if the afternoon be far advanced, and the evening of life be at hand, then the opportunities of fruit-bearing, and of usefulness to others, will have gone by.

I write this especially to encourage Sunday-school teachers in their Christian work. You are endeavouring so to plant the children in the garden of the Lord, that they may get the morning's sun; and in proportion to your success there is a fair prospect that their characters will become lovely and good, and that throughout life they will be blessed themselves, and a blessing to others. So far as service in the Church and the interests of society are concerned, the conversion of the young is of far greater importance than that of the old. Hence, while we earnestly strive to bring ALL who are dark and sinful to partake the enlightening and saving influences of the Lord Jesus, let us especially do this for the children; remembering that "the sweet singer of Israel" said, "He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, as a morning without clouds." Let us work and pray, that they may be converted early in life; for then "the Lord God" will be to them "a sun and shield;" He "will give grace and glory;" and "no good thing will He withhold from them" so long as they "walk uprightly."

MAKE AN ARK FOR YOUR CHILD.

THE story of Jochebed and her little ark of bulrushes seems to be one especially recorded for the comfort of mothers. Though in our peaceful land such perils as those which surrounded the cradle of Moses are unknown, yet every parent who watches by a baby-boy, may learn a lesson from the Israelite mother who, strong in faith, twined that green nest for her little darling. For every infant born into this world of danger and trouble, an ark should be woven of many prayers. In two points of view we may regard every such infant as in a position not unlike that of Jochebed's babe, when found by Pharaoh's daughter in his little floating cradle.

The child has been born to danger, and under the doom of death: he is redeemed, adopted, and may be destined to great usefulness and exalted honour. Should a mother's eye rest on these pages, let her follow out with me a subject which can scarcely fail to be one of deep interest to her heart.

Your child, my Christian sister, has, like Moses, *been born to danger, and under the doom of death.* You have transmitted to him a fallen nature; he has first opened his eyes to the light in a world of which Satan is the prince—that Pharaoh whose *wages is death*, that tyrant who seeks to destroy the babe whom you so tenderly love. You cannot keep your little one from all the perils and temptations which, if he live to manhood, will certainly surround him. You cannot prevent his being exposed to trials as perilous to his soul as the waters of the Nile were to the body of the infant Moses. What can you do to guard your child from dangers in which so many have perished? Like Jochebed, strong in faith, make him a little ark of your prayers.

And, to turn to the brighter side of the subject, if you have to share Jochebed's fears, may you not inherit her hopes also? It is no earthly princess, but the gracious Saviour Himself who has raised your child from his low estate, reversed his doom, adopted him as His own, and placed him as a little Christian in your arms, with the words, "*Take this child away, and nurse it for Me, and I will give thee thy wages.*" The destiny which may await your babe is one which is greater and more glorious than your imagination can conceive. Can the human mind grasp all that is contained in the titles, "member of Christ, child of God, inheritor of the kingdom of heaven?" You are tending an immortal being; a future seraph may be cradled in your arms! Those soft lips, pressed so closely to your own, may hereafter utter words that shall influence the destiny of souls through the countless ages of eternity; to that mind, which can scarcely yet hold even the sweet assurance of a parent's love, may be unfolded mysteries into which the angels desire to look. If care and anxiety press on your soul when you think of what your child *is*,—feeble, helpless, "born to trouble as the sparks fly upward,"—there is deep rapture in the thought of what that child *may be*. O!

dedicate him now to his God; ask for him not fame, power, or wealth, nor the riches of Egypt; but ask for him grace to follow the Lord fully, to choose "the reproach of Christ;" ask for him the spirit of humility, faith, and love which was given to Jochebed's favourite son. In view of the glorious destiny to which he is called, as well as of the perils which beset him, make him a little ark of your prayers.

An honoured woman was Jochebed, mother of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, all peculiarly favoured by God; and thrice blessed is every Christian parent, whether her offspring live for usefulness below, or be early taken to bliss above, who at the last day shall appear with an unbroken family before the Heavenly King. "Thou whose blood hath redeemed me and mine, and whose grace has preserved us, —lo! here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me!"—*House Beautiful.* By A. L. O. E.

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

ANN AND ELLEN:

THEIR QUARREL AND RECONCILIATION.

Ann H—— and Ellen J—— were great friends; they always came to school together, and sat next each other; when either of them wanted help, the other was always ready to afford it.

Ann was a very clever girl, proud and high-spirited; but she was so upright and conscientious, that I could always trust her. I placed implicit confidence in her word, knowing that she was incapable of deceit or meanness. I was very proud of her; for the superintendent never gave the school a question which she could not answer: indeed, her knowledge of Scripture was wonderful, and she has often puzzled me with her strange ideas and almost unanswerable inquiries.

Ellen J—— was a quiet, rather dull, child; one whom I could neither trust nor like; for she was not open and sincere, but always seemed anxious, when she was in fault, to lay the blame on some one else. Ellen would be sure to tell me if any of the girls did anything wrong. She was obstinate, too; if I punished her in any way, she would never own that her punishment was just, but would persist in saying that she did not do wrong. But every character, however unamiable it may be, has some redeeming trait in it; nor was Ellen's without one, for she was very affectionate and anxious to please, and had a very tender, susceptible heart. I often wondered how two girls so very dissimilar in character and disposition came to be so closely bound together by ties of friendship; but so it was.

One Sunday, about ten months ago, I found, on entering my class, that Ann and Ellen were not, as usual, seated together, but were as far apart as they could conveniently get. I watched them during the afternoon; and, from Ann's scornful glances at Ellen, and from Ellen's sulky looks and pouting lips, when she caught those glances, I gathered that they were estranged. When I see anything of this kind in my class, I always notice it; for I want my children to believe that I am interested in everything that affects them; so I turned to Ann, and said, "Why are you not sitting in your usual place, dear?"

A whole chorus of voices began to

answer me, but I soon stopped them; for I do not like talebearing, and I knew that I could trust Ann to tell me the truth without palliation or exaggeration. I was not mistaken; for she said, "We have compositions to do in the National Schools, and mine are always the best, so the teacher praises me; and on Friday I heard Ellen tell another girl that some one else wrote my compositions for me; and indeed, teacher," she continued, the indignant blood meanwhile colouring her otherwise pale cheeks, "I would never steal, and I think it as bad as stealing, or telling lies, to show an exercise that some one else made, and call it mine; I wouldn't do it, indeed, teacher!"

I believed and respected the dear, noble little creature. Ellen listened: she said never a word in her own defence; but muttered, sullenly, "Nasty cross thing; I'll never love her again."

I told Ellen she had done wrong, and that she ought to tell Ann so; but she would not. Then I told Ann that she ought not to harbour angry feelings, and begged her to be friendly with Ellen.

"I will," she said, "as soon as she asks me."

Week after week passed on, and these children were still unreconciled. I did not let a Sunday pass without urging them to forgive and forget; but Ann's pride, and Ellen's obstinacy, were effectual barriers to the entrance of forgiveness and love. I did not think it possible for childish hearts so long to entertain resentment; and I felt really miserable about the girls. But I exhausted all my powers of reasoning, exhorting, and persuading in vain; the two were obdurate still.

I was taken very ill about this time, and was obliged to resign my scholars to other keeping; but I heard about them continually, for I loved them too much to let pain or illness rob them of their place in my thoughts. Weeks passed on; still Ann and Ellen were estranged. I sent messages to them often, telling them how grieved I felt about them, and how they were offending God, but it was in vain; neither would yield *first*.

When I began to get a little better, I sent to let my scholars know that they might come and see me, if they wished. Among the first that came was Ann H——. She seemed shocked to see me so ill, and when I spoke to her about the sinfulness of pride and self-will, the tears stood in her eyes, and she seemed on the point of yielding; but some rebellious thought struck her, and she tossed her head, and said defiantly, "Teacher, I won't speak *first;* Ellen vexed me, and she ought to say she is sorry; and until she does, I will never be friendly with her."

Just at that moment the door-bell rang, and the servant, answering it, announced the arrival of two more of my scholars. They entered; and, to my great delight, I saw that one of them was Ellen J——, and the other, my little favourite Ella W——.

When Ellen came in, Ann rose up, and said she must go, but I thought I would not give up without one more trial; so, holding the little hand which she offered me fast in mine, I said,—offering up, as I did so, a silent prayer to God for the success of my last appeal,—"Children! if you won't be friends because it is right, and because God is angry with you, will you be friends to please me? I am very ill, as you see, and it may be the last request I shall ever be able to make. Ann, will you shake hands with Ellen, and forget the unkind speech which she uttered in a thoughtless moment?"

While still speaking, I believed that my appeal was succeeding, and as soon as I had finished it, I found I was

not mistaken; for Ann walked proudly up to the chair on which Ellen was sitting, and, holding out her hand, said, "There, Ellen, I'll be friendly with you; not that I am less angry with you, but it will please teacher. Shake hands, Ellen!"

The ice was broken, and little Ellen's tender heart was touched. She pushed aside the coldly proffered hand, and, clasping Ann's neck with both arms, cried, in a voice broken with sobs, "O, Ann! darling, forgive me! indeed, I didn't mean it; love me again, Ann; I'll never vex you more!" My prayer was answered, the breach was filled up, the severed link was again joined, and the children went home happy.

A week afterwards they called together to see me, and their little faces were beaming with smiles as they saw me look pleased. Ellen, placing her hand confidingly in Ann's, turned to me, and said, "We are quite friends now, teacher; and we will pray to God to make us better girls, so that we may not vex Him by quarrelling any more."

Sunday-school teacher! take courage. However hard your task may seem, however far off success may appear, don't be cast down. I had begun to give up all hope of seeing those children reconciled; and when my faith was weakest, my hope faintest, God conquered the pride of the one, and broke the stubborn will of the other; thus rebuking my faithlessness, and bringing about in one moment what I had been trying, I fear too much in my own strength, to do for weeks.

M. E. Humphreys.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

THE CLOSING WORDS OF OUR LESSON.

"Charlie," said the teacher, "how do you think the disciples felt when Jesus appeared to them in that upper room?"

Charlie answered, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

"Why were they glad?"

"Because they loved Him."

"Well, boys," continued the teacher, "suppose the Lord Jesus should come to our class to-day in person; suppose He should sit down here in my place, how would you feel? 'Glad?' Just look down deep into your hearts, and answer me."

Henry shook his head, and answered, "I do not know."

No answering look said, "I should rejoice to see Him." Not one voice exclaimed, "I should be glad."

At length Robert answered frankly, "I should want to get up, and go away."

"What, go away from your Saviour, Robert! You cannot mean it," said the teacher, sadly.

"Yes, feeling as I do now, I should want to go away."

"O, my child! do not say so; do not feel so. It reminds me that there may be a time when He will tell you to go away from Him."

Such were the frank, though fearful, words of a Sabbath-scholar. O, in how many older hearts do they find an echo, if not an utterance! How many would wish to go away if they saw the Lord Jesus coming! How many do go away when they feel His Spirit drawing near them, or hear His loving voice saying, "Come unto Me!" How many even ask Jesus to go away "for this time!"

Robert was almost startled at his own confession, because it was true.

"Why would you go away?" asked

the teacher. This time there was no reply. "Is it because you feel yourselves sinful to be in the presence of the sinless One? or is it because you would be ashamed to be seen in His company? Or is there no beauty in Him that you could desire? Which reason is yours? Boys, Jesus is here to-day. His presence makes me glad. O! do not go away; for there is a day coming when He will say, 'I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded.' O, heed His call to-day! Take the offered Hand, and let the Saviour lead you to Himself and heaven."—*Sunday-School World.*

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL EXCURSION IN IRELAND.

Among the festival excursions of last summer, probably not any exceeded in interest, and but few in dimensions, one which started from the clean and pleasant city of Armagh, on Wednesday, July 24th. A procession of scholars, teachers, and their friends, headed by Dr. Lynn and the Rev. F. Elliott, was formed at the Abbey-street Wesleyan school-house, and proceeded to the railway-station before ten a.m. Scholars, and others from Kinnigo, Alistragh, Richhill, Hamiltonsbawn, and Markethill, joined the party at the Armagh and other stations, until at length the train of twenty-two carriages, drawn by two powerful engines, was freighted with about fourteen hundred passengers,—children and adults,—forming the largest and most happy party that had been known to pass over the line. Warrenpoint was the terminus of the journey, from which place the company walked to the beautiful grounds and house of Clonevan, kindly opened for their reception by the proprietors. The place is about a mile from Warrenpoint, and is situated on the northern shore of Carlingford Bay, or Lough. The scenery of the district is thus described by Mr. J. B. Doyle, in his "Tours in Ulster:"—"Probably in no part of the world is there a more secure or a more beautiful harbour; enclosed between the Carlingford and Rostrevor mountains, which dip down sharply upon its shores, it is sheltered from the violence of every wind, and presents a noble basin about eight miles long by four broad. From almost any place between Warrenpoint and Rostrevor, the bay has all the appearance of a spacious lake, embosomed amidst woods and mountains. On its shores are numerous villas. The aërial effects occasionally observed, are well worthy of notice. Frequently, during the summer, when the weather is perfectly calm, the scene which is here presented is one of the loveliest that can be imagined. The whole landscape is reflected on the unruffled bosom of the water with a distinctness that is truly surprising. The inverted mountains, with the woods and villas, hang as if within the hollow of a lower heaven,—the upper and reflected landscapes mingle into one, imparting to the scene a dreamy grandeur, a sublime magnificence, not to be expressed by words. Here and there a yacht with snowy sails, or a becalmed ship drifts listlessly along the silvery line which marks the almost imperceptible boundary between the real and the reflected landscape. All is stillness and beauty; and the only appearance of life is the occasional passage of the snowy sea-fowl as they glide along, or plunge into the water after their finny prey. Indeed, at all times the scene is one of ever-varying interest. As the sun changes its position, or the clouds their hue, the landscape assumes a corresponding aspect. But, perhaps, the most striking effect is produced when the evening sun causes the shadows from the Carlingford mountains to stretch along over the bay; deepening the waters to an

amethystine hue, and wrapping the lower grounds in purple gloom, only to cause the golden beams that flood the upper landscape, along the cliffs and woods of Slieve Bane, to glow with a richer lustre."

After spending a delightful day in this charming locality, every one of the party reached home without any injury or accident. The pleasures enjoyed were various; and at half-past three, p.m., in the Clonevan grounds, the Rev. F. Elliott contributed to the profit of the occasion by delivering the following—

ADDRESS TO THE SCHOLARS.

"My dear young Friends, I have frequently thought this day of the words of St. James: 'For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' Let us think of this to-day—

> 'Life is like a painted dream,
> Like the rapid summer stream,
> Like the flashing meteor's ray,
> Like the shortest winter's day,
> Like the fitful breeze that sighs,
> Like the wavering flame that dies;
> Darting, dazzling on the eye,
> Fading in eternity.'

Let this duly impress us now.

"My young friends, I think you feel free and happy to-day. To this day you have looked forward, through the cold frosty mornings of spring as well as of winter, when you sang, 'I'll away, I'll away to the Sabbath-school.' To this day you looked wistfully during the last month, when the sun was very hot, and the Sunday-school very warm. Well, it has come, and you have been spared to see it; your superintendents, and teachers, and friends have not failed you; they have, after much time and trouble, and at considerable expense, brought you to this far-famed and somewhat romantic place. They wish to do everything desirable for you that would gratify you—minister to your health and cheerfulness. This is a most laudable desire on their part. Now, they could, with much less expense, have taken you to a lawn in Caledon, or Lurgan, or Markethill, where you could physically exercise yourselves as well as you can here. But they desire that you should be improved mentally as well as physically by your trip. Now, see to it, that you do not come here, and only run, and ramble, and leap, and look around at this rich and bold scenery; but also *reflect* and *reason* on what you see, and try to lift your thoughts 'from nature up to nature's God.' Take notes of, and make reflections on, what you see.

"How noble a creature is man! How great in power are some men! Others are great in wisdom, others in skill, and others in holiness. Think how skilful the men were who invented railroads, with all their adaptation to the end proposed; yet they were once little boys like some of you. How quickly and nicely we were conveyed down here to-day. What number of horses would it have taken to draw us here, and when should we have arrived? How, then, should a boy cultivate his mind, and aim at usefulness through life! See the boats and ships. How useful they are! How men go across the seas, as on a high road, and bring the rich fruits and important produce from one country to another! They were built by men who were once lively boys like you. See the sea, 'the restless ocean,' flowing and ebbing perpetually; but this motion is the means of its purity, and of its great serviceableness to all the tribes of the vegetable kingdom, and to the entire family of man. Now see the wisdom and goodness of God in setting all the waters in motion; and try and think of the advantages to mankind, in watering the earth by rivers, and setting machinery in motion, and in cleansing the earth, and in accomplishing hundreds of beneficial purposes for man! Try to get your minds impressed with these things to-day.

"Take notes. Pliny, that distinguished Roman scholar, born in the year of our Lord 23, at Como, when out for recreation, as we are to-day, says, 'Sometimes I hunt; but then I bring with me a pocket-book, that, while my servants are busied in disposing the nets and other matters, I may be employed in something that may be useful to me in my studies; and that, if I miss my game, I may at the least bring home some of my own thoughts with me, and not have the mortification of having caught nothing all day.' You are not great

scholars yet, nor great orators, nor great mechanics; but I implore you take notes; and, by the help of God, return home wiser boys and girls from this trip. You see these beautiful mountains, why are they built so high? Is it to keep the fishes from getting on the land? No! Is it to keep the waters from overflowing the earth? Not at all. Why? Let me remind you these are only 'little hills' compared with other mountains in Ireland —Croaghpatrick and Macgillicuddy's Reeks. In placing them the Creator was mindful of man and earth; they act as nets set in water to catch fish, for they arrest the water in its escape from the sea in bodies of vapour, like balloons, which dash against them, and are broken, and distil their contents around. Thus these mountains become saturated, and in their bodies are reservoirs to contain the springs of water which flow out on the valleys below! Think of the great Creator, then, who in wisdom has made all these things; think of them as products of His wonder-working hand, and gracious goodness towards the children of men, and towards all His creatures.

"And now let me say, try to take care of little things. You have heard the adage, 'Take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves.' This is a good rule for economy; but the principle underlying it is,—be right in little things. In all your conduct, in all your company, in all your tempers, in the most trivial things,—be proper, be just, be kind, be courteous. If not, you will fail in great matters, and never become distinguished for excellence. Chemists tell us—and they know what they say to be true—that a single grain of the substance of iodine will impart colour to seven thousand times its weight of water. It is so in higher things. One bad companion for an hour, one bad book for an evening, one bad habit or bad temper, may give colour to a whole life, and ruinously change a young man, or a young woman. Now, cultivate the kindest disposition, and the best tempers, and the utmost self-control this day, to-morrow, and to the end of your life. For the Lord has left nothing undone that would contribute to your happiness; and His people, His Church, are following His example, as you must see and feel to-day. Prosperity and happiness are within the reach of every one of you. Believe this, act upon this; only aim at these desirable results in the way God teaches, and you may count upon success. The eldest daughter of Dr. Doddridge was a lovely and engaging child. As she was a favourite with her family and friends, she often received invitations to different places at the same time. Her father once asked her, on such an occasion, 'What made everybody love her so well?' She answered, 'Indeed, Papa, I cannot think, unless it be because I love everybody.' (This interesting child died before she completed her fifth year.) Now, believe me, this is the way to true nobility, to lasting greatness and happiness. The Emperor Maximilian being requested to grant an individual a patent of nobility for a certain sum, said, 'I can make you more rich; but none can ennoble you but your own virtues.' This is a golden saying, and should never be forgotten. Of what value is a large fortune, or a vast estate, or a high title, if the possessor be a drunken sot, or a foolish prodigal, or a licentious profligate, or a wretched miser? Of no value. It only hastens the ruin of the possessor.

"My young friends, none can ennoble and make you happy but God. No position in this life can do this except you have the saving grace of God producing its legitimate virtues. An Italian bishop had struggled through life without repining, and had met with much opposition in the discharge of his duty, without betraying the least impatience. A friend, who admired those virtues, one day asked him if he could communicate the secret of being always content and easy? 'Yes,' replied the old man, 'I can teach you my secret with much facility. It consists in nothing more than in making a right use of my eyes.' His friend begged him to explain. 'Most willingly,' replied the prelate. 'In whatsoever state I am, I first look up to heaven, and remember that my principal business here is to get thither. I then look down upon the earth, and call to mind how small a space I shall occupy in it after death. Lastly, I look abroad into the world, and observe how many there are more unhappy than myself.

Thus I learn where true happiness is placed, where all my cares must end, and that I have no reason to repine.'

"I am afraid I have occupied too much of your time to-day; but I may take shelter in the refuge to which a clergyman once resorted when he exceeded his usual time. Being engrossed with his subject, the clock struck one; so, after pausing a moment, he exclaimed, 'Time reproves me, but eternity commends me.' My earnest and hearty desires are for your welfare. It is certain we shall never all meet together on this earth again. Before I take my leave of you, I would pray the Lord in His infinite mercy to grant you grace, and dispose your hearts to His service, that you may honour Him always, and in all things. Take King Charles' rules:—

"'Profane no Divine ordinances.
Urge no healths.
Maintain no ill opinions.
Report no grievances.
Make no comparisons.
Make no long meals.
Touch no state matters.
Pick no quarrels.
Encourage no vice.
Reveal no secrets.
Keep no bad company.
Lay no wagers.'"

ORIGINAL POETRY.

ASPIRATIONS.

O! SMILE on me, my God, and hold my hand
Through life's rough way;
I long to feel the purer airs of heaven
Around me play:
I cannot rest if Thou art not with me;
No light, no joy, I find away from Thee.

My soul is thirsting for a stronger love,
A higher life;
A perfect, deep, enduring, heaven-born peace,
Amidst the strife
Through which I fight, to gain the promised rest,
The home of God, the mansions of the blest.

I would, O God! my life should be one song
Of praise to Thee;
That in my heart, His image fair and clear,
My Lord might see;
That this high purpose should my life run through,
Thy Name to glorify, Thy work to do.

I want to know, each moment of my life,
That Thou art mine,—
That on me beams, through all my joys and griefs,
Thy face Divine;
Until, at length, the joy be granted me,
To see Thee, Jesus! and to dwell with Thee!

Westminster. E. A. R.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

May 10.—SECTION IV., QUESTION V.

Kitty and Jane.

KITTY MILLS went to a Sunday School. If you had seen Kitty while her teacher was talking to her, you might have supposed that she was a good child; but she was not. One day she saw her mother put two rosy apples in the cupboard; they were to be roasted for her little brother, who was ill. Kitty went to the cupboard; she looked at the apples; then she put them to her lips, then she thought they would taste very nice. At length she ate them both. The theft was speedily detected. Kitty cried bitterly, and promised never to be guilty of stealing any more. But the little girl, though frightened, was not truly penitent. You will be sure of this when you are informed that soon afterwards she stole some jam, which had been sent for her sick brother. Kitty had a sister, named Jane. One Sunday, whilst the teacher was trying to instruct her class, Jane stood behind her, and made the scholars laugh. When reproved for her fault, Jane was really sorry, and asked God to forgive her, and help her to do better in future. Jane never repeated her fault. She had really repented.

May 17.—SECT. IV., QUEST. VI.

Joel Bulu.

A NATIVE Missionary, the Rev. Joel Bulu, wrote a letter, in 1853, to the Missionary Committee. Part of that letter may help us to understand the nature of faith in Christ. "I was a sinner; but I did not know this until I heard the preaching of Mr. Thomas, from the Gospel of Matt. xiii. 30. But, when I heard, my heart was pierced, and I woke up quickly from the sleep of sin, and I then knew that I was the chief of sinners. I longed and cried, and poured out my prayers in secret, and confessed my sins unto God. My food was bitter to me; I could not relish it; but I drank my tears and ate my sorrow in fear of the consequences of sin, lest they should fall on me and crush me before God. But at a love-feast I was enabled to believe in Jesus from the very *root* of my heart; and I relied upon His blood, and believed in His death that I might be saved; and immediately the great love of God came to me from heaven; for there was heard by the ears of my soul the Great Voice which sounded in me: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art reconciled to God.'"

May 24.—SECT. IV., QUEST. VII.

Ragged Tom.

TOM was a poor, ragged boy. His home was an old house in a narrow court. A stool, a deal table, an old bed in one corner, and a bag of shavings in another, were all the goods contained in the room where Tom, with his father and mother, lived. Tom's hands and face were generally very dirty, his hair matted, his clothes were in rags, and his feet were without shoes. He often had nothing to eat, and no fire to warm him, however cold the day. Many were the blows and kicks the poor boy received from the rude men and lads who lived in the court. It was well for him that a Ragged-school was established in the neighbourhood, and he was invited to go. He then learned that he had three enemies of which he had not, hitherto, thought much. These were dirt, ignorance, and sin. He speedily vanquished the first at a pump. The second he overcame by patient effort at the school. He sought help from God, and finally conquered the third. Then Tom became a respectable, happy, and useful young man. Best of all, he had God's smile.

May 31.—SECT. IV., QUEST. VIII.

No Time for Explanation.

A YOUNG man, in the vigour of health, and with the fairest prospects for long life and happiness, was thrown from a vehicle, and was carried to a neighbouring dwelling. A medical man was sent for. As soon as he arrived, the young man asked him, in a tone of intense anxiety, "Must I die, Sir? Must I die? Deceive me not in this." He was told that it was not likely he would live more than an hour. "Must I appear before my God and Judge in an hour? The Lord knows I have made no preparation for meeting Him." He was reminded of God's mercy, and exhorted to repent and "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." But he replied, "I do not know what it is to repent and believe. I need all this explaining to me, and *death will not wait for explanations*. I might have learned the way, and have been found

ready, but I have neglected the great salvation." The unhappy sufferer, his eye gleaming with despair, continued his cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" till, in less than an hour, his voice was hushed in death.

June 7.—Sect. V., Quest. I.

Benson the Infidel.

He was dying. A Minister, uninvited, went to see him. The good man endeavoured to lead the dying infidel to repentance; but in vain. At length he said: "When you left London you had a widowed mother; a pious, excellent woman. Do you know what has become of her?" "No," replied Benson; "but my conscience has a thousand times reproached me for my rebellious conduct towards her. I do wish I could see her again." "That privilege will never be yours in this world. She died in St. Thomas' Hospital a short time since. Her last prayers were for you." The dying man replied: "She had more reason to curse me; but I am cursed already. The curse of an offended God is upon me. Hell opens its mouth to receive me. Devils are waiting to torture me. O, horror! horror! Talk not to me of heaven, I shall never taste its hallowed enjoyments. I tell you, my doom is fixed. In a few hours, perhaps in a few minutes, my soul will be in hell." As the Minister prayed, a peal of thunder was heard; the wretched and dying Benson shrieked, fell back with a groan, and died.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

May 10.—Sect. VII., Quest. VI.

Baptismal Obligations.

All sinful ways are to be forsaken.—On the day of Pentecost, the disciples—assembled to plead the promise concerning a Divine Comforter—were gladdened by the gift of the Holy Ghost. On the same day they began to preach the Gospel in its fulness. Most likely all the twelve preached Christ as opportunity afforded. But one of them was the chief speaker. Who was that? (Acts ii. 14.) Many who listened to the Apostles were deeply convinced of sin. "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were taught to repent of their sins, and to escape from the evil companionship of the ungodly. Whether the evil was within their own hearts, or among their acquaintances, they were to abandon it. Those who professed to be willing thus to forsake sinful ways were baptized. (Acts ii. 38—41.)

All Christian truth is to be received.—We are informed that, soon after our Lord's ascension, a person of rank had travelled a very long way in order to worship God in the Temple at Jerusalem. He was riding in his carriage, on his way home, and reading a portion of God's Word, when a Christian evangelist approached him, and spoke to him. What was the name of the evangelist? From what country did the man come who was reading? Philip taught the Ethiopian eunuch that Isaiah wrote concerning Jesus of Nazareth who had recently been crucified on Calvary. The sincere inquirer believed on Jesus. Then he was baptized. (Acts viii. 26—40.)

All God's commands are to be obeyed.—A man who feared God, and was trying to please Him, but who had never been led to Christ, was directed in a vision to send for Peter, that he might be further instructed in the things of God. What was the man's name? Did he obey the direction? Did Peter go as he was desired? When Peter entered the house, Cornelius said: "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." The Lord sent His Holy Spirit to bless Cornelius and his friends. They were also baptized.

Exercises.—What ought baptized people to forsake? What ought baptized people to believe? What ought baptized people to obey? Can we be truly blessed if we neglect these obligations? Whose servants are we, by baptism, declared to be?

May 17.—Sect. VII., Quests. VII. and VIII.

The Sign of the Eucharist.

Perhaps all may not know the meaning of the word "Eucharist." But, as it is often used, and the use of the word is sometimes very convenient, it is perhaps better to explain it here. The Lord Jesus, when instituting the Lord's Supper, employed a Greek word

which resembles the word Eucharist. In Matt. xxvi. 26, the word is translated "*blessed*:" in the following verse it is translated "*gave thanks*." From this expression the early Christians formed a word which they thought would suitably designate this sacrament. It is convenient to follow their example when we wish to speak of the Lord's Supper in one word. The word "*Sacrament*" applies to Baptism also. Let us now think of the outward sign, or elements employed.

Bread and wine represent Christ's body and blood.—When this sacrament is administered, the Lord's death is distinctly placed before our thoughts. We are assisted to remember His dying; and the careless are reminded of it. Those who receive the bread and wine profess to believe in the great *fact* of our Lord's crucifixion on Calvary. They declare that they regard that death as *sacrificial*. He "tasted death for every man." "He is the propitiation for our sins." They affirm, in the most impressive manner, that they are endeavouring to place a *personal reliance* on that death. The bread and wine have, therefore, an important use.

The bread and wine undergo no transformation.—The Romish priesthood affirm that when the officiating priest has pronounced some Latin words, meaning, "This is My body," and "This is My blood," the elements are transformed into the body and blood, and Godhead of the Lord Jesus; so that they may be, and ought to be, adored. We can all see that this is preposterous, and absolutely blasphemous. The Lord meant that the bread and wine would represent His body and blood. He was alive, and seated in their midst when He used the words; so that there was no danger of mistake. When He said, "I am the true Vine:" "I am the Door:" "I am the Good Shepherd," His meaning was apparent. The vine, the door, the shepherd, and other objects, represent Him. So do the bread and wine.

Exercises.—What are the elements used in the Lord's Supper? Why is the name Eucharist sometimes employed? Do the elements undergo any transformation? Ought the bread and wine to be adored? Why ought they to be regarded with reverence?

May 24. — Sect. VII., Quest. IX.

The Grace of the Eucharist.

In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Christian disciples draw near to their Lord with devout thanksgiving. They endeavour to present themselves to Him with grateful love. They also look to Him for the comfort, strength, guidance, and purity of which they feel their need. Christ still blesses the bread and wine employed to represent His body and blood. True believers are constantly experiencing the blessedness resulting from obedience to the gracious command given by Christ on that same night in which He was betrayed. There is an inward grace as well as an outward sign. The early disciples, we learn, were partakers of this grace.

The risen Saviour thus revealing Himself to His disciples.—We read that on the first Easter day, two of Christ's disciples were walking from Jerusalem to a village in that neighbourhood. They were talking about the crucifixion of their Lord, which had recently taken place. They were very unhappy because of their Lord's sufferings and death; and they were also greatly perplexed. If He were really the Son of God, why did He allow Himself to be so cruelly treated? What did He mean when He used to speak of "rising again?" A Stranger joined them, and inquired concerning their grief, and, explained to them the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. When they arrived at the village, they besought the Stranger to remain. What was the name of the village? Who was the Stranger? When did He make Himself known? Do you know the name of either of the disciples? The two told the Apostles that the Lord revealed Himself in "breaking of bread." (Luke xxiv.)

The ascended Saviour thus revealing Himself to His disciples.—We might learn from the institution of the Lord's Supper that it was intended for all disciples of Christ, though not then present. But this is made quite clear after our Lord's ascension. Was St. Paul present when this sacrament was first instituted? He was then a Pharisee. But Christ taught him concerning this. To him and the Corinthian believers this privilege

belonged. (1 Cor. x. 16, 17; xi. 23—28.) So Christ ever reveals Himself to His faithful people.

Exercises.—What is there in the Lord's Supper in addition to the outward sign? Where did Christ, after His resurrection, thus reveal Himself to His disciples? Did Christ thus reveal Himself after His ascension? To whom does He now thus reveal Himself?

May 31.—Sect. VII., Quest. X.

The Purposes of the Eucharist.

The Saviour's injunction is thus obeyed.—If Christian disciples had no other reason for attendance at the Lord's Supper, their Lord's command would surely be enough. Christ said: "This do in remembrance of Me." (Luke xxii. 19.) Indeed, our entire submission to a superior may sometimes be best discerned by obedience to a command, the reason of which is not discerned. In the days of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, a prophet was sent from Judah to rebuke the idolatry of the King of Israel. It was said to this prophet "by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest." (1 Kings xiii. 17.) Why was this prophet commanded not to taste anything in the neighbourhood of Bethel? What we surmise may be correct or otherwise. Probably the prophet did not know why; but he could have manifested his determination to obey God, whether he could explain the reason of the command or not.

The Saviour's name is thus confessed.—The early disciples loved their Lord. Until they were dispersed abroad by persecution, they continued to assemble in Jerusalem as the disciples of Him who had been recently crucified. "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts ii. 42.) All who partook of bread and wine, as disciples of Christ, would be understood to make profession of devotedness to Him. They would thus affirm,—however His claims might be regarded by others, — we know that He is the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Would these disciples be in danger? From whom? They were Christ's faithful witnesses.

The Saviour's goodness is thus acknowledged.—On one occasion, when Christ was near to Samaria, a small group of men approached so near to Him as to make themselves heard. They did not come quite close to Him. They were lepers. What did they want from the Lord Jesus? How did He treat them? What did He tell them to do? Were they healed? How many came back to thank Him? Was the grateful man a Jew? What do you think of the nine? (Luke xvii. 11—19.) We ought to show our gratitude.

Exercises. — How ought we to regard Christ's commands? Ought Christian believers to conceal their discipleship? Ought we in all possible ways to declare our thankfulness for the Saviour's love? What may believers obtain at the Lord's Table?

June 7.—Sect. VII., Quest XI.

Preparation for the Eucharist.

Need for true self-examination.—We may be numbered among Christ's professed followers, and yet be in no suitable state of heart for the reception of the Lord's Supper. It is the duty of those who have the oversight of the Church of God to use diligent care to maintain its purity. They, however, may discern no sufficient reason to exclude me from the Lord's table, yet I may really be altogether unfit to approach it. How many disciples were known as Christ's Apostles? Who betrayed our Lord? Was Judas one of the twelve? We read concerning the time when the Lord's Supper was instituted: "Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve," &c. (Matt. xxvi. 20.) Judas Iscariot was present then. But he was no true disciple. We must search our own hearts.

Nature of true self-examination.—We must endeavour to ascertain whether we are really seeking after those blessings represented in the Lord's Supper. If resolved, though only for the present, to neglect the "Great Salvation," our reception of the bread and wine would be a solemn mockery, and highly offensive in the sight of God. We must ask God to help us as we search our own hearts. Christ spake a parable concerning "a certain king, who made a marriage for his son." Many of those

who were bidden made light of the invitation. One who came did not provide himself with "a wedding garment." What was the result? (Matt. xxii. 11—14.)

Results of true self-examination.— Persons, when the Lord's Supper is about to be administered, may reflect on their past conduct and present purposes, and may perceive they are unfit, and therefore stay away. They are still under God's displeasure. If unfit for the table of the Lord, they are unfit for heaven. The Apostle Paul directed the Corinthian professors to examine themselves. The result was to be, that they should come in a proper manner. They were to turn their backs, not on the table of the Lord, but on their sins. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat," &c. (1 Cor. xi. 28.)

EXERCISES. — Is there any danger of our being self-deceived? What must we ascertain concerning ourselves? Will past sin prove a sufficient excuse for future neglect? Are any fit for heaven who are not fit to receive the Lord's Supper?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Mother and Children.

THERE was great joy, one Sabbath forenoon, at the Butterworth Mission-station. A Kaffir woman and her two little children were to be baptized. The woman had been very ignorant, and awfully wicked. But she had heard of Jesus, and had obtained the grace of God. During six months she had been "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Her conduct had been so blameless, that the Missionary thought the time had arrived when, though the woman had been so vile a sinner, she might be publicly received by baptism into the Church of Christ. She was allowed to bring her two children with her, that they also might be baptized, and might afterwards be trained for Christ. The good people who had known the woman in the years of her folly and wretchedness, and who had seen the marvellous change, were overjoyed. She came forward before the congregation to declare how she had, by the grace of God, renounced all her wicked practices, and how, henceforth, she would serve the blessed Saviour. She could scarcely speak, however, for the tears of joy and gratitude would gush forth from her eyes. Her thus weeping caused the people present to weep also. But her vows were at length publicly uttered, and she went forth from the Christian sanctuary to "fight the good fight of faith," and so "lay hold on eternal life." She also went forth to train her little children to overcome. May they all be crowned at length! (No. II. *May* 10.)

The Poisoned Wafer.

A PIOUS woman had a Romanist husband. This circumstance was the occasion of many annoyances. The priest had free access to the house, and was constantly endeavouring to lead the good woman to join the Romish Church. She, however, had been accustomed to read the Word of God, had found it precious to her soul, and was resolved never to part with that priceless Book. She could not, however, avoid being often engaged in discussion with the priest. Among other dogmas which he affirmed, was that of transubstantiation. He taught that, when he had pronounced the words of consecration, the bread and wine were no longer what they seemed to be; that they were Christ Himself, both in His human and Divine natures. The good woman, at length adopted a somewhat strange method of confuting the priest. She had been directed to make the small cake, called a wafer, which the Romanists employ in the Lord's Supper. She was to be present when the priest administered the Sacrament to her husband, who was sick. She arranged accordingly. When the priest had consecrated the elements, and was about to place the wafer in his mouth, she suddenly asked him, "Is that no longer bread?" The priest, somewhat angrily, replied, "It is Christ Himself." "Proceed, then," was the woman's answer; adding, "I thought you ought to know that I put some arsenic into the wafer. If it happens to remain as I made it, and you persist in eating it, you will speedily be a dead man." You may be sure that the priest did not make the experiment. (No. II. *May* 17.)

Mrs. Susannah Wesley.

THE mother of the Rev. John Wesley (and of Charles) was a woman of high moral worth, and of a very strong, highly cultivated, and richly-stored mind. From her early days she endeavoured to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and to serve God with a loving heart. But at that time the Gospel was not generally preached in its fulness and power. Mrs. Wesley had not been taught that an assurance of the Divine favour was the common privilege of all believers; so she did not claim it for herself. About the time

the Methodist Society was founded, Mrs. Wesley obtained clearer views respecting the forgiveness of sins, and the direct witness of God's Holy Spirit. She, therefore, became exceedingly desirous to obtain the blessing of conscious pardon. Her gracious Lord was pleased to reveal Himself to her soul whilst she was commemorating His dying love at His table. One of her sons-in-law, a Clergyman, was placing the cup in her hand, repeating the words, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee," when the blessing was imparted. She afterwards told her son, the Rev. John Wesley, "The words struck through my heart, and I knew God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven *me* all *my* sins." (No. II. *May* 24.)

Rev. William Entwisle.

In his thirty-second year, and when anticipating a life of usefulness, Mr. Entwisle was called to enter the dark valley. But he was graciously sustained. It seemed strange that he should have to leave his father, and his wife,—to whom he had only been united a few years,—and his work, upon which he only seemed to be fully entering. But he knew that the arrangement must be wise and loving, because it was made by God. During the closing weeks of his life the Saviour graciously revealed Himself to His suffering servant, especially in the Lord's Supper. His Superintendent (the Rev. John Newton) administered it to the invalid, his wife, his father, and others. The dying saint greatly rejoiced: he said,—

"How can it be, Thou heavenly King,
That Thou shouldst me to glory bring?"

For a season, towards the end of his life, his mind was depressed through bodily weakness and temptation; but victory and joy were imparted whilst receiving the emblems of his Redeemer's passion. He exultingly declared,—

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath," &c.

(No. II. *May* 31.)

Lady Maxwell.

Not many of God's saints have attached a higher value to the Lord's Supper, or derived from thence more sanctified delight, than Lady Maxwell. In reflecting on her enjoyment on one of these occasions, when she was in feeble health, and frequent pain, and much perplexity, she uses the remarkable expression, "My heaven of indescribable enjoyment." But it is well to bear in mind that Lady Maxwell was accustomed to employ strict self-examination before approaching the table of the Lord. The day before, or during several days, she would endeavour to search her heart, that she might yield herself fully to the Saviour. She waited on her Father in heaven, who "seeth in secret," and He rewarded her "openly." (No. II. *June* 7.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

May 3.—Secret Faults.

Psalm xix. 12: "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults."

1. *Faults.*—What is a fault? Whatever we do that is wrong. Sometimes evil is done through not *knowing* better; sometimes through want of *care*, not doing what we ought to do; sometimes because we *will* not do right. Then there are many kinds of faults: faults of temper, of words, of thoughts. Who could count the faults of a single day? David said of his, "They are more" in number "than the hairs of my head."

2. *Secret faults.*—A secret is something hid: and faults may be hid from the sight of others. A child may hide a naughty temper, or an evil thought from parents and teachers. But this is *foolish*, and may be sinful. Sometimes an open fault is a less evil than one hid in the heart. Who would hide a bag of poison in a fountain? Every stream that trickled forth would carry death with it. So faults, though hid long in the heart, will surely be seen in evil words and ways. Yet some faults may be hid even from our own sight. But can any fault be hid from God? Hear what David says of this: "Thou understandest my thought afar off." "O God, Thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from Thee."

3. *How to get rid of faults.*—They are like spots and stains on what should be white, or like sores upon the body. But no water can cleanse them away; no medicine can cure a secret fault. God only can do this. But will He do so? Yes, in many parts of His Word He says that from all our sins He will cleanse us. Have you any faults? Pray that you may be rid of them. Say every day, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults."

REVISION.—What are faults? Name different kinds of faults? Have we many or few? What does David say of this? What is a "secret fault?" Why is it wrong to hide our faults? How may they be got rid of? Repeat David's prayer?

May 10.—The Evil and the Cure of Sin.

ROM. v. 12: "By one man sin entered into the world."

1 *How sin came.*—When God had made the first man and woman, He placed them in a garden to dwell there. What was the name of the man, and of the garden? What kind of place was the garden? No place on the earth is so fair and so full of happiness as Eden was. It had all that was pleasant to the sight and the taste, and everything needful to make Adam and Eve happy. But there was one reason which did more to make it full of joy than the beauty of its trees and flowers, and the richness of its fruits; there was *no sin* there. Yet, sad to say, after a time sin came. Eve, tempted by Satan, took the fruit of the tree which God had said must not be touched. Then Adam also took it, and thus sinned against God. There was no joy in Eden now; its happiness had gone. For, see—

2. *What sin brought with it.*—As Adam and Eve walked in the garden, they heard the voice of God calling them, and they ran and hid themselves under the trees. God said to Adam, "Where art thou?" And Adam said, "I heard Thy voice,..and *I was afraid!*" Why afraid? They had ever had joy in the presence of God before; but Adam knew he had done wrong, and sin had brought fear, and shame, and sorrow. Ever since then it has been so. A child who has done wrong will fear the face of his father who loves him. "We all have sinned." How soon it shows itself. Even a little baby shows selfwill and naughty tempers. Besides these evils, sin has brought God's anger upon men, and the punishment of *death*. But is there no escape from sin? O yes! let us now learn—

3. *How sin may be cured.*—It cannot be done by man, for all are alike sinful. We are like the Israelites bitten by the serpents; no one can cure another. Where, then, is our help? In the Lord Jesus Christ. For this He came down from heaven, to bear the punishment for us, to die, that we may be saved from sin. If we go to Him as He has bid us, we shall be cleansed from sin. Do you remember the leper's prayer, and the answer it brought? The Bible speaks of a place and a time when there shall be no more sin. When and where shall that be?

REVISION.—How did sin "come into" the world? What has sin brought with it? Why was Adam afraid to see God? How may sin be cured? Where shall there be no more sin?

May 17.—Jesus Transfigured.

MARK ix. 5: "Master, it is good for us to be here."

1. *The scene on the mountain-top.*—Jesus once took Peter and James and John to "a high mountain, apart by themselves." These three disciples were often much favoured in this way, but this was the most wonderful time of all. As they were alone in the stillness of the hill-top, a great change came upon Jesus: His face shone as the sun, bright and glorious. His raiment became white and beautiful, so as nothing had been seen on earth like it before. While they wondered, and were in great awe at this, behold, there appeared Moses and Elijah talking with Him. But Moses had been dead hundreds of years, and Elijah had long since gone from the earth. Do you remember where he was taken, and how he went there? From what place, then, had these come to the mountain? Here was a wonder as great as the change upon the Lord Jesus. These two appeared "in glory." They had brought with them something of the brightness and glory of heaven, from which they came.

2. *How the disciples felt.*—All was so strange, the brightness and glory were so great, and Jesus, and His heavenly visiters, so different from anything they had seen before, that "they were sore afraid." Yet this was not all; for Peter said, "Master, it is good for us to be here." The sight was so grand, and the company so good, that Peter wished Jesus to let them make tabernacles in which He and Moses and Elijah might dwell for a time. But this could not be: "he knew not what he said."

3. *The Voice from heaven.*—As Peter

spake, a bright cloud came down, overshadowing them all, and a Voice from its midst said, "This is My Beloved Son: hear Him." Whose Voice was that? What did it show Jesus to be? Now the disciples were more full of fear than before; they fell on their faces and were afraid to look upon the cloud. But Jesus touched them, and bade them arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, the brightness had passed away; Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw "Jesus only."

4. *What the disciples learned.*—(1.) Something about Jesus,—that He was the Son of God. They saw how much greater He was than themselves, and why He had so much power, and wisdom, and glory. The Voice said, "*Hear Him.*" Think of this as you pray to Him, and trust in Him. (2.) Something about heaven,—that it was a *real* place of glory and happiness. They saw something of its glory, and of those who dwell there. None are there but such as have been cleansed from sin through the blood of Christ.

Revision.—What happened to Jesus on the mountain? Who were with Him? Who visited Him, What did the Voice from the cloud say? What did the disciples learn about Jesus? and about heaven?

May 24.—The Stubborn King.

Exod. ix. 7: "He did not let the people go."

1. *Plagues through sin.*—Our last Lesson about Pharaoh told us of the river being turned to blood. Do you remember the distress of the people, and how the King refused to do as God bade him? After that, other evils were brought upon the land; swarms of frogs came in vast numbers from the river; then the dust of the ground was turned to lice, and the wisest men of Egypt feared, and said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God!" Then a great swarm of flies was brought upon the land, and at this plague even Pharaoh trembled, and seemed about to obey the word of the Lord; but, when God took away this plague, he dared still to refuse to let the people go.

2. *Fighting against God.*—God was now very angry with this stubborn King. He sent a punishment more severe than before. God smote all the beasts of the Egyptians with a sore disease. "The hand of the Lord was upon the cattle which was in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep;" "and all the cattle of Egypt died." Here was a sign of the anger and of the power of the Lord. Yet, sad and terrible to say, Pharaoh's heart was hardened; "he did not let the people go." Here was one so bold in sin as to "fight against God!" Can any man win the victory in that dreadful contest? How strong a hold has sin upon the heart!

3. *God's longsuffering.*—Why did He not at once destroy this wicked King? To give him time and motives to repent; to show His kindness and great mercy; to show the evil of sin, and its power over man. These are lessons for us, of warning and of guidance. Will you thus contend against God, and raise His anger against you? Flee for mercy before sin gets power over you.

Revision.—Name some of the plagues brought upon Egypt? Why were they sent? Why could not Pharaoh let the Israelites go? Why did not God at once destroy him? How may we get free from the power of sin?

May 31.—Comfort for the Distressed.

Ps. lxviii. 5: "A Father of the fatherless."

1. *God is the Father of all.*—He created us, and preserves us, and all living things. The prophet Malachi asked, "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" Both man, and all things living, are His great family; for "He hath made us," and by His power and care we are kept from day to day. The Lord Jesus has taught us to pray to God as "Our Father." We are all His children. But, though He is the Father of us all, He is especially,—

2. *The "Father of the fatherless."*—The father is the guide and support of his family. It is a sad loss to a child when his father is taken away by death. None but those who have felt this loss can tell the grief it brings; or know how sad the home is when "father" is gone, and that love and comfort are lost which his presence only can bring. But is there no light to cheer such a home? Is there any one to whom those who dwell there may turn for comfort? Here is a word for such: "A Father

of the fatherless is God." Is there a fatherless child here? Is it not blessed to know that God will be his Father? But may we be sure that He knows all who need His help? Yes; "the eyes of the Lord are in every place." No home so poor or desolate but He careth for it, no fatherless little one is left unnoticed by Him.

3. *Praise to God.* — When David thought of all the goodness and mercy of God to such as needed it, he said, "Sing unto God, sing praises to His name." And this is what we should ever do. Have you parents and friends to care for you, and to keep you day by day? Who has given them? Are you fatherless and friendless? Take comfort in knowing that "One is your Father, who is in heaven."

REVISION. — Why is God called "Our Father?" Why is He especially the "Father of the fatherless?" How does He know who need His help? Why did David sing praises to God? Why should we do so?

DAY-SCHOOL AFFAIRS AND WORK.

OUR SCHOOL SAVINGS' FUND.

IN the year 1857, notice was given in our day-school that if any of the scholars would bring their pocket-money to the master instead of spending it, he would not only take care of it for them till they wanted it, but would add a penny to every shilling that any child deposited. Since that time nine hundred scholars have taken advantage of the teacher's offer; and the amount deposited has reached the sum of £400. As this statement will probably suggest a few inquiries as to the manner of working the fund, we will endeavour to supply answers to the most likely questions.

1. *Is not the collection of so much money in small sums a troublesome business?*—There is, of course, some trouble about it. We average about eighty depositors per annum, and in the course of the year these depositors make about one thousand payments; but we find twenty minutes at noon, every Tuesday, quite sufficient.

2. *Who pays the interest?* — The Committee. Those children who deposit money in the Savings' Fund are less likely to leave the school than if they had no such link to it as this investment forms. They are also more regular in their attendance than others; and several cases have occurred in which deposits have been used by parents for paying unavoidable arrears of school-fees. The increase in school-pence soon repays the outlay of the Committee. A couple of guineas per annum will pay the interest on deposits amounting to £40. The interest on the sum deposited with us has not reached £18, which is less than four-and-a-quarter per cent.

3. *But £40 at one penny in the shilling come to £3 6s. 8d.; how do you make two guineas meet the case?*—Our third regulation says, "In no case shall more than one shilling per annum be given." We found that some parents were anxious to send their savings to be taken care of; we decided, therefore, that, since no child would be likely to save more than twelve shillings in a year, one shilling would be a sufficient gratuity. We do not, therefore, pay interest on the parents' savings, though we are willing to let them have the convenience and security of our Savings' Fund, if they desire it. About one-fourth of the deposits may be set down as the parents' savings. Some small sums receive no interest because they are withdrawn before they have been deposited a year.

4. *How do you manage with depositors who leave school to go to work?*—We deal with old scholars exactly the same as with those continuing in the school. These deposits often amount to £10 in the course of a year.

5. *When does the Bank year terminate?*—We have no particular dates at which all shall open and close their accounts; we reckon a year from the time the first deposit is made; but a much larger sum is withdrawn at Christmas than at any other time.

6. *How do you guard yourselves and the parents against the tricks of naughty scholars?*—Every depositor is provided with a card. On this card his payments are entered, as well as in the master's book; and, as the regulations are printed on the back of the card, the parents are able to check every payment themselves. No deposits are repaid without a note from the parents; and then the card, with the account fully settled, is sent with the money to the parents. The card, thus settled, forms a security to the teacher as well as to the parents; but, as an additional security, the payee signs his name in the teacher's book opposite his closed account.

Some of the advantages of the School Savings' Fund will have been suggested by the foregoing statements; but, in the actual working, circumstances occur which bring out advantages of an interesting kind. About half the money withdrawn, year by year, has been spent in clothes; and many a child has been warmly clad, during the winter, who would otherwise have wasted his money, and have suffered from the cold. The habit of economy formed at school, has been a great advantage to scholars in after life, as many have gladly testified. "We have no coals;" "Father is out of work;" "Mother is ill in bed;" are troubles that have many a time been relieved by the money which a little economy laid by in prosperous times. The teacher is brought into contact with the parents; he has many opportunities of free conversation with his scholars; he can see further into their homes; and he has the pleasure of knowing that he has been assisting in the formation of habits which will be of great value in after life.

W. H.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

The Government Education Bill.

On Saturday, March 28th, was published the draft of the Bill presented to the House of Lords by the Lord President, the object of which is to regulate the distribution of sums granted by Parliament for elementary education in England and Wales, and for other purposes.

This Bill provides that, before any building-grant for the erection of a new school is made, the persons applying for the grant must show to the satisfaction of the new Secretary of State for Education (whose office is to be created by this Bill) that there is, in the neighbourhood where it is proposed to establish the new school, a sufficient population of the labouring class unprovided with the means of education to supply the school with scholars; that the character of the religious instruction to be given is suitable to the families to be educated; and that the school is likely to be maintained in efficiency. The claimants must also provide a suitable site for the proposed school, and comply with such conditions as to the tenure thereof as the Secretary of State may think fit to require. As to religious instruction in connexion with building-grants, all questions connected with the nature, amount, and character of the religious instruction to be given shall be decided exclusively by the persons invested with authority by the trust-deed, and neither the Secretary of State, nor any other person, shall have the power to interfere; but when the proposed school will be the only public school available for the education of poor children in a district, and when there is within that district any considerable number of children for whom no more suitable means of education are likely to be provided, and whose parents are likely to object to the religious instruction intended to be given, or to the religious worship intended to be used, the trust-deed must contain a clause providing that no child resident within certain limits shall be excluded from the school, or deprived of any of the benefits derivable from it. Nor shall any child be compelled to attend any Sunday-school, church, or other place of worship as a condition of receiving instruction on the

week-days. Grants for the enlargement of existing schools are only to be made when the conditions already referred to are complied with, and in cases where the right of Government inspection is secured. The Secretary of State shall issue certificates to teachers of elementary schools who have passed a satisfactory examination, and who have subsequently acted as teachers of elementary schools, during which time they shall be called probationary teachers; but, in the event of those certificates being cancelled, they shall be delivered up. The Bill also imposes certain conditions, the fulfilment of which shall be necessary to entitle elementary schools to grants; and if, upon an inspector's report, there appears to be any special reason for withholding those grants, they shall be withheld until a further examination has been made by two inspectors. No grants are to be made towards the building or fitting up of normal schools; and only for their maintenance when the Secretary of State is satisfied that the premises are suitable, the management satisfactory, and the staff efficient.

The second part of the Bill directs the method to be employed for obtaining an educational census, and there are various schedules attached.

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.—No. I.

RIGHTLY aranged, the names below,
A noted prophetess will show.

When widows were in need of aid,
Who coats and garments for them made?

When troubled much with doubt and fear,
Who to a monarch ventured near?

When one a great Apostle tried,
Who a monarch sat beside?

When three widows greatly mourn'd,
Who unwillingly return'd?

When from home two daughters went,
Who hid idols in her tent?

When a captain was displeased,
Who the angry man appeased?

When a judge was seated near,
Who so pray'd man could not hear?

H.

BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

61. When Paul was stoned at Lystra, Timothy was probably with him. (Acts xiv. 19.) What Scripture shows this?

62. The Holy Ghost twice prevented Paul from preaching where he had desired to preach. Name the places.

63. Name the father of Andrew.

64. What office was held by Erastus, the companion of Timothy? (Acts xix. 22.)

65. Which of the twelve Apostles is known to have been previously one of John's disciples?

66. When Paul had almost finished his earthly course, he had only one Christian friend with him. Name that friend.

H.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

ELIZABETH KIRKWOOD:

AN AFRICAN, FORTY YEARS A SUNDAY SCHOLAR.

SOME of us, who are far distant from our native land, think with pleasure on the increasing attention which is being shown to the working of Sabbath-schools in England. We are gratified to hear that many are very properly inquiring what are the results of all the efforts made from week to week by the vast number of

teachers employed in endeavouring to train aright the rising generation. It may also be interesting to those who are in the old country to know that such matters are not neglected in this distant region of South Africa. I suppose, too, that the readers of "The Sunday-School Magazine" will not object to an occasional notice of our Sabbath-scholars; and, presuming that the following sketch will not be entirely uninteresting to them, it is presented for their perusal.

Elizabeth Kirkwood was, for many years, a slave in the Cape-Colony. As slavery was abolished in this land more than thirty years ago, it is plain that she was not very young when she died, at the end of the year 1866. I learnt, however, from a brief report read at the monthly meeting of the teachers, that Elizabeth, or "old Beitje," as she was more frequently called, was a regular attendant at the Bury-street Sabbath-school, Capetown, South Africa, up to within two or three Sundays of her decease, though when she died she was seventy-four years of age. But had the readers of this account seen her wending her way to the school for the last ten years of her life, (in addition to going to worship God in the sanctuary,) they might have asked, "How does she manage it?" and have concluded that she at least was pursuing knowledge under difficulties. In walking, she moved first one side and then the other, with apparent pain, and only with the aid of a good stout staff, which, of course, she always carried. She did not, however, grow "weary in well doing;" and was, up to the end of her life, anxious to learn her lessons. True, she never advanced far in learning, as she did not get beyond the spelling of easy words. Some persons may think this a proof that she did not derive much benefit: let such say, however, whether she was not a pattern of perseverance. It is a remarkable fact that she had been a scholar in the Sabbath-school for nearly forty years, having also been a member of our Church for the same period.

She was brought to God under the ministry of the late Rev. Barnabas Shaw, shortly after she had been bereaved of her husband. Having entered upon a new life, and feeling that she had much to learn, she determined to use all the means within her reach for gaining instruction, and to embrace every possible opportunity for obtaining assistance in Divine things.

Her last illness, though not very long, was exceedingly painful. She bore the whole of her sufferings, however, with the utmost patience, and without a murmur escaping her lips. When told that there was no hope of her recovery, she received the tidings with perfect calmness, as if the language of her heart were, "Good is the will of the Lord." While able to speak, she was ever cheerful; and when friends visited her, she gladly joined them in singing the praises of God, or gave a clear testimony concerning her faith in Christ, and her possession of a "good hope through grace." When near her end, one of those who surrounded her bed asked her if she still felt happy; but, having lost the power of utterance, she could only point upwards, and smile assent, which she did most significantly; and soon her ransomed spirit went up to join the saints who know no sorrow.

Thus died old Beitje Kirkwood, after a sojourn on earth of just three quarters of a century; having been a scholar in the Sabbath-school for nearly two score years of that time. I think, her diligence and perseverance ought not to be forgotten. J. T.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The New Lesson-Book for Sunday Schools. Fifty-two Lessons on Scripture Doctrines, arranged in Accordance with the Second Catechism of the Wesleyan Methodists. London: Wesleyan Conference Office. —In an article entitled "Our Sunday Schools, How to Use them," which

appears in the April number of "Good Words," the Bishop of Oxford says, "The day on which they are held, the moral machinery called into action to provide them with their staff of teachers, and the object which calls their teaching into existence, all point to this,—that their real object is *to teach religious truth, and to form religious character.*" With that statement we shall all agree; and shall, therefore, hold that all arrangements relating to school-discipline, school-material, and modes of instruction should be directed towards the attainment of that twofold purpose. As a contribution towards it, we believe that teachers of elementary classes, who are earnestly aiming at the results named, will welcome this "New Lesson-Book," and its companion. A workman bent on producing good work, will be thankful for good implements; and such teachers will be sure to value the assistance which this book will afford them in systematically teaching the doctrinal and practical truths of Christianity. The plan on which it is arranged is admirably simple and effective. At the head of each page the topic of the lesson is given in bold type; then follow the section and paragraphs of the Catechism with which the lesson corresponds. Five or six brief Scripture sentences, chiefly monosyllabic, are printed in large type; these are so selected as to represent different bearings of the subject, and will afford teachers good topics for explanation and enforcement. Below, a short passage of Scripture is given in rather smaller type; this is generally part of a narrative, and further illustrates the main topic of the page. At the foot an appropriate verse of a hymn is placed. The book is not intended to supersede the Catechism, but to prepare its way,—to assist and supplement its use. We earnestly recommend its adoption by our Sunday-schools: it will form an excellent item of equipment for the junior classes,—one which qualified teachers will be able to make very serviceable in *grounding* scholars in those truths which we are most anxious that they should learn. A companion book of Fifty-two Lessons on Bible-History is also in course of publication.

The Beloved Disciple: a Sermon on the Death of the Rev. John Hannah, D.D.: with a *Biographical Sketch* of the Deceased. By F. J. Jobson, D.D. Pp. 139. London: Sold at 66, Paternoster-row. —The prompt issue of this elegant little volume will not only gratify the Methodists of Lincoln, who requested its publication, but those almost numberless friends and admirers of Dr. Hannah who are to be found in nearly every part of the world. They who knew him best will be glad to be reminded of the many excellencies of character which commanded their esteem, and of the endowments which made him so great a gift to Methodism; and will "glorify God in him," as they read this sketch. The writer speaks of it as "fragmentary and familiar," and hopes that it may be useful as a contribution towards a more "full and finished Biography." It has led us earnestly to hope that such a volume will soon be forthcoming; but, in the meantime, we are very thankful for this honest and excellent picture, drawn by Dr. Jobson's speedy and able hand. In Dr. Hannah he had a noble subject to delineate, and he has given us a portrait which exhibits a very high estimate of the excellencies and abilities of his friend; but not *too* high, all will say, we believe, whose knowledge of Dr. Hannah enables them to judge.

House Beautiful; or, the Bible Museum. By A. L. O. E. Pp. 243. London: Nelson and Sons.—With considerable skill the writer of this goodly volume has treated, as topics suggesting various practical and suggestive truths and lessons, about forty such objects as "Noah's Olive-leaf," "Gideon's Ephod," "Temple Lily-work," &c. Take, as a specimen of style and treatment, the following remarks which occur in the chapter on "The Rags of Ebed-melech," after a clear and concise sketch of the facts recorded in Jeremiah xxxviii., xxxix. "Ebed-Melech not only did a substantial service to Jeremiah, but he did it in a tender, considerate way: he did not, as most men would have done, hurt the prophet even in helping him. The complaint of the ingratitude of those who have received great benefits, is very common

in the world; but we shall often find that ingratitude has been caused by the want of delicacy in the benefactor who complains,—he has supplied the *ropes*, but neglected the *wrappings*." The idea to which the book owes its construction is rather novel and fresh, (perhaps though, reminding one a little of Bishop Hall's "Contemplations,") and has necessitated some exercise of ingenuity; but it has been wrought out judiciously; and, as a whole, the result is a volume calculated to entice the attention of readers to what will do them good.

King Jack of Haylands. Pp. 138. Nelson and Sons.—In the shape of a story of a school-boy's life, this book supplies some pleasant and profitable reading for young folk.

Wesleyan Juvenile Offering: a Miscellany of Missionary Information for Young Persons. Vol. I. New Series. London: Wesleyan Mission-House.—The successive monthly numbers of this capital serial for last year, form a very attractive little volume, which has only recently reached us. The numerous and superior illustrations which it contains, many of them drawn from nature, afford much instruction as to Mission fields, scenes, and facts; while its pages are all that could be desired for simplicity, interest, and variety. It is worth while to recommend it to our children; for, if put into their hands, it will be sure to attract and please them; and they cannot read it without having their zeal for Missions stimulated.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

Evil Company.

THE following beautiful allegory is translated from the German:—

Sophronius, a wise teacher, would not suffer even his grown-up sons and daughters to associate with those whose conduct was not pure and upright. "Dear father," said the gentle Eulalia to him, one day, when he forbade her, in company with her brother, to visit the volatile Lucinda, "Dear father, you must think us very childish if you imagine that we should be exposed to danger by it." The father took in silence a dead coal from the hearth, and reached it to his daughter. "It will not burn you, my child; take it." She did so; and, behold, her beautiful white hand was soiled and blackened, and, as it chanced, her white dress also. "We cannot be too careful in handling coals," said she, in vexation. "Yes, truly," said the father; "you see, my child, the coals, even if they do not burn, blacken; so it is with the company of the vicious."

Popish Superstition.

THE "Semaine Liturgique," ("Weekly Liturgy,") of the diocese of Poitiers, contains an article by Canon V. Barbier de Mentault, on "Devotion to the Agnus Dei," ("Lamb of God,") from which the following is an extract:—

"A medallion of white wax, of oval shape, stamped with the effigy of the Paschal Lamb, which the Pope alone blesses and consecrates, at fixed periods, such is the Agnus Dei. The wax employed in the manufacture of the Agnus is that of the paschal candles. Sometimes this wax is mixed with the dust of the bones of the martyrs found in the catacombs of Rome, and this composition is called the 'Paste of the Holy Martyrs.' It is a pious and wise practice to keep an Agnus in one's home, and to take it in journeys by land and sea. The Agnus preserves from sudden and unprovided death. It appeases the wind, it stills the storm, it calms the whirlwind, and keeps off the tempest. It saves from shipwreck, and averts the lightning; it quenches fire, and stops its ravages. It is effective against the overflow of rivers, inundations, and destructive rains. The custody of the Agnus in Rome is entrusted to Monseigneur his Holiness's vice-chamberlain."

A Mother's Influence.

How touching is this tribute of Hon. T. H. Benton to his mother's influence:—

"My mother asked me never to use tobacco: I have never touched it from that time to the present day. She asked me not to gamble, and I have never gambled. Whatever capacity for endurance I have at present, and whatever usefulness I may have attained in life, I have attributed to having complied with her pious and correct wishes. When I was seven years of age, she asked me not to drink, and then I made a resolution of total abstinence; and that I have adhered to it ever since, I owe to my mother."

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

MAY 3.—Morning Lesson.

THE WORKS AND WORD OF GOD.—Psalm xix.

For repetition, verses 13, 14.

Summary.—David shows that, while God's glory is unceasingly displayed in His works, it is manifested more abundantly in His Word; and prays for pardon and grace.

I. God's Works.—V. 1—6. The *heavens*, the *firmament*, *day* and *night*, are here personified, and represented as proclaiming the *glory* of their Great Creator. *The heavens* are the starry worlds, and *the firmament* the vast expanse of space in which they move. They proclaim God's boundless power and wisdom. See Rom. i. 20. As by "day" the sun is always shining, and the moon and stars by "night," days and nights are said to teach their successors the knowledge they have gathered from the heavens and the firmament. V. 3. *There is no speech*, &c.—The words in italics should be omitted. The meaning, then, is that, dumb-heralds as they are, their testimony is powerful. V. 4. *Their line.*—The word signifies a measuring line; so that the meaning seems to be—their territory is *all the earth*. *Set a tabernacle for the sun*,—i.e., given it a place. V. 5. *As a bridegroom.*—See the Illustration.

II. His Word.—V. 7—10. The former verses seem to be introductory to these. He whose glory is thus proclaimed by creation, is the Author of the Bible, whose greater excellencies are here described. *The law*, or Word, *of the Lord*, is praised in twelve sayings, which are given in six pairs, each expressing a cause and an effect. (1.) It is *perfect*,—it *converts the soul*. Perfect in itself, it makes those perfect who receive and obey it. (2.) It is *sure*,—it *makes wise the simple*. Because it is perfectly reliable, it is fitted to give to the humblest the knowledge of God's will. (3.) It is *right*,—it *rejoices the heart*. Because its requirements are right, it makes known the only way of peace. (4.) It is *pure*,—it *enlightens the eyes*. For *pure*, read "clear." Clear itself, it enables us to see, or understand, clearly. (5.) It is *clean*,—it *endures for ever*. For *clean*, read "pure." Because perfectly pure, it is imperishable. See Matt. v. 18. (6.) It is true,—it is *righteous altogether*. Its *judgments* are never unjust. V. 9. *The fear of the Lord*,—is put for the instructions given to promote this pious fear. Compare Ps. xxxiv. 11; Prov. i. 29; ii. 5; xv. 33. V. 10. *More to be desired*, &c.—God's people find greater delight in His Word, than others in riches and pleasure.

III. His Servants,—V. 11—14. "The law of the Lord" is here regarded in relation to God's *servants*. *Warned*,—fully informed of his state, and hope, and danger. *Great reward.*—They who *keep* God's law, thereby become not only holy and wise, but safe and happy. See Prov. xxix. 18. V. 12. *Who can understand his errors?*—Are not those even of the righteous numberless? *Secret faults*,—sins of infirmity, and sins of ignorance. V. 13. *Presumptuous sins*,—wilful, intentional, daring acts of disobedience. *From the great transgression*,—or, from "much" transgression. (Margin.) The Psalmist means that, unless God *kept him back*, he would inevitably fall into great wickedness. V. 14. *Let the words*, &c.—David here prays that God would accept this Psalm—of praise, and meditation, and prayer; and God heard him. Tens of thousands of pious people have been instructed and blessed in reading it.

Reflections.—1. *God's works bear witness of Him.*—"All people may hear these natural, immortal preachers speak to them, in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God."—*Henry*.

2. *God's works are not sufficient for a full revelation of Him.*—They might have taught much if man had remained innocent; but the "word" was necessary to recover him from his fall.

3. *The Word of God is perfect.*—All attempts to improve it are, consequently, absurd.

4. *The heart is deceitful, and prone to sin.*—Examine yourselves. Pray for pardon and preservation from sin. Only God can keep you from it.

QUESTIONS.—How is God's glory seen in His works? Why was His Word necessary? What are its six excellencies and effects? Why is it more desirable than "gold?" how "sweeter than honey?" What is the "reward" of keeping it? What is meant by "errors" and "secret faults?" What by "presumptuous sins?"

Illustration.—THE BRIDEGROOM'S CHAMBER.

See v. 5. "The espousals were performed by the man and woman under a tent, or canopy, erected for that purpose. Into this 'chamber' the bridegroom was accustomed to go with his bride, that he might talk to her more familiarly; which was considered as a ceremony of confirmation to the wedlock. While he was there no person was allowed to enter: his friends and attendants waited for him at the door, with torches and lamps in their hands; and when he came out he was received by all that were present with great joy and acclamation. To this ancient custom the Psalmist alludes."—*Paxton.*

MAY 3.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

LOAVES AND LEAVEN.—Mark viii. 1—21.

SUMMARY.—Our Lord feeds four thousand people miraculously, refuses to give the Pharisees a sign, and cautions His disciples against false doctrine.

I. THE MULTITUDE FED.—V. 1—9. *The multitude,*—who had come for religious instruction. The place was a mountain near the Sea of Galilee, Matt. xv. 29. V. 2. *Three days.*—They were so taken up with our Lord's teaching, that they forgot how the time went. V. 3. *Came from far,*—so eager they were to see and hear Jesus. Some think it a great hardship if they have to walk a mile or two to chapel. V. 4. *Whence can a man,* &c.—Very true; but what cannot GOD do? They had forgotten the "five thousand," the "*five* loaves," and the "twelve baskets," ch. vi. 38, 42—44. V. 5. *Seven.*—The disciples themselves had not made much provision. V. 6. *Gave thanks,*—as we should also do to the Giver of all good. V. 7. *He blessed,*—i.e., the food. He pronounced it blessed, as One who could command the blessing. His blessing causes our food to nourish us. V. 8. *They did eat,*—the food miraculously increasing in the act of distribution. *And were filled,*—so that they made no scanty meal. *Took up of the broken meat,*—they were thus taught frugality in the midst of plenty.

II. THE SIGN REFUSED.—V. 10—13. *A sign from heaven.*—Some miraculous appearance in the sky. All He had done went for nothing. These questioners were of those who attributed His power over devils to Beelzebub. See ch. iii. 22. They seem to insinuate here that, with the help of "the prince of the devils," he might give signs on earth, as Pharaoh's magicians did; and hence they demand "a sign from heaven," such as we read of, Exod. xvi. 4; Josh. x. 12; 1 Sam. xii. 17; James v. 17, 18. *Tempting Him,*—pretending goodwill, but meaning mischief. V. 12. *Sighed deeply,*—over their amazing obstinacy, and their consequent guilt and danger. *This generation.*—It is characterized, Matt. xvi. 4. *Seek after a sign?*—seeing they are not open to conviction. *No sign,*—such as they ask. V. 13. *Left them,*—because they would not receive Him, and His stay would only add to their condemnation.

III. THE CAUTION.—V. 14—21. *Had forgotten to take bread,*—so that, on landing, it was necessary to procure a fresh supply. *The leaven of,* &c.—Leaven is used in bread-making to make it light. It works unseen, but certainly; and our Lord shows by this similitude that the *Pharisees* and *Herodians* concealed the real character and tendency of their doctrine. Though utterly corrupt, it was insinuating and plausible, and the more dangerous on that account; the disciples, therefore, were to be carefully on their guard against it. *Herod,*—the Great, who

corrupted the true religion with an admixture of heathenism. V. 16. *It is because we have no bread.* — He cautions us against tradesmen belonging to these sects, who will cheat us if they can, and might be glad to poison us. V. 17. *Why reason ye*, &c. —Need I again remind you that the want of bread is no difficulty to Me? *Understand . . hardened?* — A darkened understanding and a hard heart go together. Compare Matt. xiii. 19. *Having eyes*, &c. — What are these organs for?

Reflections. — 1. *A feast for the soul is worth some self-denial.*—So the "four thousand" thought, and so should we. The Puritans used to say, "Brown bread and the Gospel are excellent fare."

2. *Jesus cares for our bodies.*—While we wait on Him and do His will, He will not suffer us to want. Ps. xxxiv. 10.

3. *We should ask God to bless our food.*—Jesus was God, and could "command" the blessing; but we can only implore it. His blessing can make much of little. Is your food coarse and scanty? take it to Him. Barley and oats, with His blessing, are better than wheat without it.

4. *Fragments are not to be wasted.*—Some thoughtless children waste the food which is obtained for them by cost and labour; and so grieve God, by destroying His bounties. Have you more than enough? Give it to the needy. Many poor children would be thankful for your "broken meat."

5. *He who cares for our bodies, cares much more for our souls.*—Seek the bread which does not perish. Obtain it, and you will live for ever. Read Ps. lxxxi. 10; Isai. lv. 1; Jer. xxxi. 25; Matt. v. 6.

6. "*Take heed*" *against error.*—It is commonly specious and subtle; it is apt to creep in unawares; it operates unseen, like yeast in meal; and its influence is pernicious and deadly.

Questions. — Where was this miracle wrought? What had the people come for? How long had they stayed? How many were fed? what with? what remained? Where did Jesus then go? Who came to Him? What did they ask for? What did they mean? Why was it refused? How were the disciples cautioned? How did they misunderstand this? What are "eyes" and "ears" for?

Illustration.—GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

See v. 6. "Before the Hindoos eat their food they take a little in their fingers, and lift it to the height of the forehead, and, in thought, offer it to Siva; and in the same way they offer their rice and fruits to the gods, and then eat them. The ceremony is called *Siva-Purethe*, that is, 'Agreeable to Siva.' It is considered disgraceful not to attend to it, and only low or vile people neglect it."—*Roberts.*

MAY 10.—Morning Lesson.

DEATH AND LIFE.—Romans v. 12—21.

Summary.—This Lesson describes the points of likeness and of contrast between *Adam*, who brought in sin and death, and Christ, who brought in reconciliation and life.

I. The two Adams.—V. 12—14. *By one man*,—Adam, the representative of mankind. *Sin entered into the world*,—as a power ruling over mankind; actual sin, and a sinful nature. See ch. iii. 9. V. 12. *And death by sin*, — temporal, spiritual, and eternal death. Sin is the dreadful parent of death in all its forms. *For that all have sinned*,—i.e., in Adam, infants not being excepted. Life depended on obedience, and death on disobedience; and the condition of death's entrance was fulfilled in the disobedience of Adam. V. 13. *Until the law*,—i.e., before it was given on Mount Sinai. *Sin was in the world.*—See Gen. vi. 5—13. *Sin is not imputed*, &c.—Since the very essence of sin consists in the violation of law. V. 14. *Nevertheless*, &c.—*From Adam to Moses*, men, in successive generations, one after another, died. *After the similitude*, &c.,—i.e., in the same way. Millions of infants died who had not committed actual sin; and millions of men and women who did not knowingly violate an express command of God, as Adam did. In all these the seed of sin planted in them by Adam sprang up

and bore its bitter fruit, death. *Of Him*,—Christ, "the last Adam." See 1 Cor. xv. 45. *That was to come*,—literally, "that is to come." The fulfilment of the "figure" will only take place completely at the last day, when in Christ "all shall be made alive." See 1 Cor. xv. 22.

II. The Two Adams contrasted.—V. 15—21. *But not as the offence*, &c.—Notwithstanding the above resemblance between Adam and Christ, in some respects they widely differ. Here is (1) a difference in degree. The *condemnation* was the result of the *one* offence of *one* man: the *free gift* was designed to cover *all* the offences of *all* offenders. Here is (2) a difference in kind. The first Adam brought *condemnation*: the second brought *justification*,—i.e., acquittal, or pardon. Here is (3) a second difference in kind. The first Adam brought in the reign of *death*: the second, the reign of *life*. This "life" includes *spiritual* life, in believers; *corporeal* life, at the resurrection; and *eternal* life, in heaven. *By the offence of one*,—or, "by one offence." *By the righteousness of One*,—or, "by one righteousness," or, "one righteous act,"—i.e., the death of Christ. See Margin, and compare Phil. ii. 8. *Came upon all men*,—or, "unto all men,"—i. e., became possible to them. *Shall many be made righteous*,—i.e., all that believe. Here is (4) a second difference in extent, or degree. *That the offence might abound.*—Compare v. 13 and ch. iv. 15. By the law came the knowledge of sin, and this aggravated the wickedness of the Jews. They knew their duty, but they did it not. *Grace did much more abound.*—It not only pardons sin, but purifies the heart, and will lead to the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. *Through righteousness*,—through the merits of Christ.

Reflections.—1. *Death is a terrible king.*—See v. 14, and Job xviii. 14. He reigns only to destroy his subjects. Under his rule all past generations have perished; and when he strikes, we must fall.

2. *There is a death of the soul, as well as a death of the body.*—All the ungodly are in this sense dead; and, unless Christ quicken them, they must die eternally.

3. *The condemned must be justified.*—All sinners are under condemnation; and the only way in which any one can be acquitted, is by trusting earnestly in the merits of Christ.

4. *All who die through Adam may live through Christ.*—The finally impenitent have only themselves to blame. They would not be saved when they might. Will you be saved?

Questions.—How did sin enter into the world? by whom? What followed? How have "all" sinned? Why are sinners who have the law worse than those who have it not? What is the "death" that Adam brought in? the "life" brought in by Jesus? the "condemnation," by Adam? the "justification," by Christ? How was Adam a "figure" of Christ? How do they differ?

Illustration.—blaming adam.

See v. 12, "How exceeding common, and how bitter, is the outcry against our first parent for the mischief which he not only brought upon himself, but entailed upon his latest posterity! It was his wilful rebellion against God that

'Brought death into the world, and all our woe!'

'For all this we may thank Adam!' has echoed down from generation to generation. May the Lover of men open the eyes of our understanding to perceive clearly that, by the fall of Adam, mankind, in general, have gained a capacity (1) of being more holy and more happy on earth; and (2) of being more happy in heaven, than otherwise they could have been!"—*Wesley.*

MAY 10.—Afternoon Lesson.

blind and blinded people.—Mark viii. 22—38.

For repetition, verses 36, 37.

Summary.—Jesus gives sight to a blind man; asks His disciples whom men supposed Him to be; demands their opinion, and Peter declares Him Messiah; foretells His death, and resurrection, and shows what He requires, and why.

I. The Blind Man.—V. 22—26. *Led him out of the town.*—The reason of this is probably given, Matt. xi. 21. The place was unworthy of such a work being done there. *As trees, walking.*—His sight was yet so imperfect, that he could only distinguish between men and trees, by the motion of the former. V. 26. *Neither go into the town*, &c.—His house therefore was in the remote extremity of the village.

II. "The Christ."—V. 27—30. *Whom do men say that I am?*—What is the popular belief respecting Me? V. 28. *They answered, John the Baptist,*—meaning that this was the most prevalent opinion. See Matt. xiv. 2. The people believed that departed spirits passed into other bodies. V. 29. *But whom say ye,*—who have long been with Me, and are therefore better able to judge? *The Christ,*—or, "Messiah,"—the Son of God, the Redeemer of Israel. V. 30. *Should tell no man,*—lest His enemies should seek to hasten His end, before His work was done.

III. The Prophecy.—V. 31—33. *Began to teach*, &c.—He had referred to these things before; but now His end was near, and He wished to prepare them for it. V. 32. *Openly,*—i.e., plainly, so that it could not be misunderstood. *Peter took Him,*—or, interrupted Him. *To rebuke Him,*—or, to remonstrate with Him. Peter could not endure the thought of Jesus suffering such things; and, besides, were He *killed*, what would become of His kingdom? V. 33. *Rebuked Peter,*—reproved his unreasoning haste, and showed him his error. *Satan.*—This word means "an adversary." Had Peter induced Jesus to forego the cross, and to avoid the shame, he would indeed have been a "*Satan*" to all mankind. *Savourest not,*—hast no relish for the purposes of My mission, and My kingdom, which are wholly spiritual.

IV. Terms of Discipleship.—V. 34—38. *Will come after Me,*—to be My disciple. *Deny himself,*—mortify the body for the soul's good. *Take up his cross,*—be willing, if necessary, to be crucified for My sake. V. 35. *Save his life,*—violate his conscience to avoid the cross. *Shall lose it,*—for ever. *Save it,*—for ever. V. 36. *His own soul,*—or, "life,"—here, and hereafter. All other *gain* will be forgotten in that tremendous loss. V. 37. *Give in exchange.*—At the judgment-day, when the guilty soul is condemned to endless woe, what could he offer as a ransom-price, even were *the whole world* his own?

Reflections.—1. *The afflicted should be pitied.*—The blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the poor, the helpless,—all these were pitied and befriended by Jesus; and all who love Him, will try to follow His example.

2. *It is important to have right views of Jesus.*—He is infinitely above "John the Baptist," or any of "the prophets;" and we must love and honour Him, not only as great and good, but also as our Divine Saviour.

3. *More is required of the taught than of the untaught.*—Whatever "men" think of Jesus, the views of "disciples" should be correct. Sabbath-scholars, who are instructed with so much care and pains, will be inexcusable if they do not savingly know Christ.

4. *Religion is a personal matter.*—Salvation is by faith in Christ; and every one is to believe for himself. What others think of Jesus is little to us. Their faith and knowledge cannot save us. Hence, therefore, the questions must be pressed home: Whom say ye that He is? What think ye of Christ? Will ye also be His disciples? Do *you* believe in Him? Have *you* received Him? Do *you* obey Him? Is He *your* Saviour?

5. *When Satan fails to shake us by his temptations, he sometimes employs our friends to tempt us.*—He failed when he tempted Jesus, Matt. iv. 10; here he got Peter to act for him.

6. *The world cannot satisfy the soul.*—The soul lives when the body dies, and must be lost, or saved. They who love the world more than they love Jesus, cannot be saved. You must be willing to leave all, if necessary, for Him. Every sacrifice made for His sake, is clear gain. The rich man took none of his comforts to hell: Lazarus took none of his wants to heaven. If the soul is lost, all is lost; and "it had been good for that man if he had not been born."

Questions.—Why did Jesus take the blind man "out of the town?" What town was it? How was the man healed? How did his sight

come back? Where did Jesus then go? What did He ask in going? What answers were given? Why did Peter rebuke Jesus? How did Jesus rebuke Peter? What is it to follow Jesus? What does He require?

Illustration.—TREES WALKING.

See v. 24. "This is an allusion to the custom of the Eastern hunters, who tie branches to their bodies, until they resemble a tree? by which device they can walk into the midst of a flock of wild animals or birds, and single out any they please. The sportsman, having in the forest changed himself into the appearance of a tree, goes gently to the skirts; and, so soon as he sees the game, he watches till their heads are turned from him, and then moves on till he is in the midst of them, when he is sure of his object. And this is a custom of great antiquity."—*Roberts.*

MAY 17.—MORNING LESSON.

THE SWARMS OF FLIES. — Exodus viii. 15—32.

SUMMARY.—The plague of frogs having failed to bring Pharaoh to reason, God sends the plague of lice, which also fails. This is followed by the plague of flies, which is equally unavailing.

I. THE LICE.—V. 15—19. *Saw that there was respite.*—The original is very expressive, showing how sorely the tyrant had felt the oppression of this plague. It means, as soon as he had time to breathe,—literally, when he "got air." Finding the plague removed, he resolved not to keep his promise, v. 8. V. 16. *Smite the dust of the land.*—The former plagues had proceeded from the water; this third was to come from the land, showing that Jehovah had dominion over both. V. 17. *It became lice.*—Some think "gnats" are meant; but gnats are bred in or on water, (see p. 96,) and give little trouble to *beasts*, with their thick covering of hair, or wool. There is no good reason for the supposition. *All the dust of the land became lice*, and neither *man* nor *beast* was exempted from the loathsome plague. This would be "a very dreadful and afflicting plague to the Egyptians, and especially to their priests, who were obliged to shave the hair off every part of their bodies, and to wear a single tunic, that no vermin of this kind might be permitted to harbour about them."—*Dr. A. Clarke.* V. 18. *The magicians did so*, &c.—Though the lice were everywhere, they sought to increase the number! They had been permitted, with the help of Satan, invoked by *their enchantments*, to produce imitations of the previous miracles; but here their power was restrained. V. 19. *This is the finger of God.*—They did not say "of Jehovah," or "the Lord," the God of the Hebrews; and all they meant was, probably, that their own principal *god* was taking sides with Moses and Aaron; and that, therefore, it was time to let the people go. This, however, had no weight with Pharaoh, who would seem to have been incensed by their admission, as they are not called in to exercise their magical arts in any of the subsequent plagues.

II. THE FLIES.—V. 20—32. *Swarms of flies,*—or, "a mixture of noisome beasts." (Margin.) It means, perhaps, winged insects of different kinds. Compare Ps. lxxviii. 45; cv. 31. V. 22. *No swarms of flies shall be there.*—Jehovah thus showed that it was HIS "finger" that was in the matter, and not that of any Egyptian deity; and that, while He was the God of Israel, He had power also over Egypt. V. 24. *The land was corrupted,* — or, "destroyed." (Margin.) The flies not only tortured the people and the cattle, but killed all vegetation. V. 26. *It is not meet so to do*, &c.—Both the sacrifices and their mode of offering them, would have been detested by the Egyptians. Animals which they held sacred, and even Divine, would have to be killed, and that *as* God should *command.* V. 29. *Let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more.*—Moses suspected his sincerity; and with too much reason, as appears from the result.

REFLECTIONS. — 1. *The impenitent abuse God's patience.*—He allows them "respite," or breathing-time, to lead them to repentance; but they are too frequently hardened by it. See Eccles. viii. 11; Isai. xxvi. 10.

2. *The power of evil spirits, however*

great, is limited.—The magicians, with their assistance, did wonderful things; but they were at length restrained by a mysterious "finger."

"In vain doth Satan rage his hour;
Beyond his chain he cannot go;
Our Jesus shall stir up His power,
And soon avenge us of our foe."

3. *When one judgment is removed from the impenitent, it only makes way for a worse.*—Pharaoh was only subdued by a succession of plagues, any one of which might have shown him how powerless he was to withstand God.

4. *The Lord knows them that are His.*—He has set them apart for Himself; and this He will make plain to all men, perhaps, in this world, and certainly in the next. See v. 22, and compare Mal. iii. 18, and Matt. xxv. 32.

Questions.—Why, when the "frogs" were gone, did Pharaoh harden his heart? What did Aaron then do? What was the result of this? Why could not the "magicians" do the same? What did they say? What did they mean? What was the next plague? Whom did it not touch? why? What was Pharaoh now ready to grant? Why could not Moses accept this? How did he caution Pharaoh before he removed the plague?

Illustrations.—I. LICE.

See v. 17. "It is known that the Egyptians were careful to keep all infested with lice out of their temples. Their priests were clad in linen garments when they ministered in them, and every precaution was adopted to keep themselves free from such vermin. But in this visitation the plague was in man and in beast. The vermin clung to all,—King, and priest, and peasant alike. Their sacred animals were also infested with them. Contempt was poured on all the gods of Egypt. The magicians themselves felt the prevailing disgust, and acknowledged that this was 'the finger of God.'"—*Biblical Natural Science.* "We may hence see what an abhorrence the Egyptians showed towards this sort of vermin. The judgments inflicted by the hands of Moses were adapted to their prejudices. It was, consequently, not only most noisome to the people in general, but was no small odium to the most sacred order in Egypt, that they were overrun with these filthy and detestable vermin."—*Bryant.*

II. FLIES.

See v. 24. "The most numerous and troublesome insects in Egypt are the flies. Men and beasts are cruelly tormented by them. You can form no conception of their fury, when they want to settle upon any part of your body. You may drive them away, but they settle again immediately, and their obstinacy wearies out the most patient man. They are particularly fond of fixing on the corners of the eyes, or the edges of the eyelids; sensitive parts, to which they are attracted by a little moisture."—*Sonnini's Travels.*

MAY 17.—Afternoon Lesson.

THE MOUNT AND THE DUMB SPIRIT.—Mark ix. 1—29.

For repetition, verses 23, 24.

Summary.—Our Lord is transfigured in the presence of Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John; shows what Malachi meant by Elijah's coming; and dispossesses a young demoniac.

I. A Prophecy.—V. 1. This verse should form part of the former chapter. Of the prophecy itself different views are taken. According to some it foretells the miracles of Pentecost, and the overthrow of Jerusalem. According to others, it simply announces the fact of the transfiguration "six days" (v. 2.) before it occurred. *The kingdom of God come with power.*—Matthew (ch. xvi. 28) says, "The Son of Man coming in His kingdom;" and Peter, speaking of the transfiguration, says, "The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. i. 16.) "There was given on the Mount a picture of what Christ would be in royalty and glory, when He should sit down on the right hand of God."

II. The Transfiguration.—V. 2, 3. *Transfigured*,—changed in appearance. *Shining*, &c.—His Divine nature shone through the vail of His flesh with a splendour which communicated itself to His very *raiment*. *Fuller*,—a thickener and cleaner of cloth. No

art could produce whiteness like this. Compare Exod. xxxiv. 29—35; Acts vi. 15. In these cases the glory was imparted from without; in Jesus, it came from within.

III. The Witnesses.—V. 2, 4—6. *Peter, and James, and John*, who were with Him also at the raising of the ruler's daughter, ch. v. 37; and in the garden of Gethsemane. They were, therefore, the chosen witnesses of the highest exercise of His power, the brightest display of His glory, and the greatest depth of His sorrow. No reason is assigned for this selection; and we can only infer that these three were the best beloved and the chief of the Apostles. *Moses*,—who, though his body was buried nearly fifteen hundred years before, (Deut. xxxiv. 6,) appeared in a human form, Luke ix. 30. *Elias*,—or, "Elijah," who, nine hundred years before, was removed, body and soul, to heaven. *Talking with Jesus*,—about His coming death, which had been the central subject of all their teaching, Luke ix. 31. *Peter answered*.—Moses and Elijah were departing. Luke ix. 33, and he wished to build them a home, that he might still enjoy their company. *Sore afraid*,—struck with awe, not terror, or Peter would not have desired to stay.

IV. The Voice.—V. 7. *Hear Him*.—Reverence and obey Him. It was the voice of God the Father. "You have heard Moses and Elijah, and the men whom they represent; but their work is done. My Son is now the one Great Teacher; and My command is, Hear Him!"

V. The Vanished Vision.—V. 8—10. "Peter had been anxious to retain Moses and Elijah, but that would not do; there must be no one to divide with Christ their homage and attention, and they are removed; and henceforth the disciples are to hear and see no man *save Jesus only*." *Till the Son of Man*, &c.—The evidence of this "vision" (Matt. xvii. 9) would then be valuable; but it might provoke hostility now.

VI. Malachi's Meaning.—V. 11—13. *Say the scribes*,—grounding their tradition on Mal. iv. 5. It is an exclamation of astonishment. Since Elijah's reappearance was foretold, why must it be kept secret? *Restoreth*,—or, "reformeth." John the Baptist is called Elijah, because, like Elijah, he was a great reformer. Matt. xvii. 12, 13.

VII. The Dumb Spirit.—V. 14—29. *Were greatly amazed*,—probably, because His countenance retained traces of the glory on the Mount. V. 17. *A dumb spirit*,—a spirit which makes him dumb. V. 19. *O, faithless generation*,—that, without frequent miracles, will not believe. V. 24. *Help Thou mine unbelief*,—strengthen me against it. V. 29. *This kind*, &c.—They had neglected the duties of prayer and self-denial.

Reflections.—1. *Jesus favours most His best friends.*—Live near to Him, and He will honour you with wonderful manifestations of His love.

2. *Live for heaven.*—To be with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, made Peter almost delirious with delight. What must it be to dwell with all the good and glorious for ever!

3. *Jesus must be obeyed.*—He is God's "beloved Son." Can you, dare you, disobey Him?

4. *Satan's influence is only evil.*—He delights to produce desolation and misery. Let him possess you, and he will drive you, now into the "fire" of presumption, now into the "water" of despair.

5. *Faith is more powerful than Satan.*—Only so believe as to be saved by Jesus, and pride, anger, peevishness, sloth, self-will, and every other work of the devil, will be destroyed.

6. *Feeble faith may be strengthened.*—See v. 24; Luke xvii. 5; Heb. xii. 2.

Questions.—Who saw Jesus "transfigured?" why they? Who met them on the Mount? What did they talk about? why? What did Peter propose? why? What Voice was heard? What was meant by Elijah's coming? What ailed the young man? Why could not the disciples cure him?

Illustration.—Mount Tabor.

See v. 2. "Do you suppose that this is the scene of that stupendous event, the Transfiguration? I see it called in question by many modern tourists and critics. . . . No more noble or appropriate theatre for such a glorious manifestation could be found or desired. . . . There are many secluded and densely-wooded terraces on the north and north-east sides admirably adapted to the scene of the Transfiguration. . . . You can examine this vexed question at your leisure, and have as good a right to form an

independent opinion on it as anybody else; for all that is known about it is found in Matt. xvii., Mark ix., and Luke ix., which you can see at a glance contain nothing very decisive against Tabor. The topographical indications are very uncertain and obscure."—*The Land and the Book.*

MAY 24.—Morning Lesson.

PLAGUES OF MURRAIN AND BOILS.—Exodus ix. 1—11.

(*For repetition*, verses 5—7.)

Summary.—Pharaoh, remaining obstinate after the removal of the flies, that plague is followed by two others,—the murrain, and the boils.

I. The Murrain of Beasts.—V. 1—7. *The hand of the Lord*,—His power manifested in judgment. *Upon thy cattle.*—The animals specified are, (1.) *the horses*,—used in war; (2) *the asses*,—employed as the beasts of burden; (3) *the camels*,—in the service, principally, of travellers and merchants; (4) *the oxen*,—by whose help the land was ploughed; (5) *the sheep*,—prized, mainly, for their wool. All these were smitten by the terrible *murrain*. How formidable a scourge this was, we may partly judge, from the cattle-plague which prevailed, not many months ago, in different parts of England. This Egyptian plague was immeasurably worse, as it visited ALL the cattle that were out at the time *in the field*, and was everywhere fatal. V. 5. *To-morrow.*—By thus foretelling the evil, God showed His knowledge and power. From this the Egyptians would perceive that the destruction of their cattle was not merely accidental. V. 7. *And Pharaoh sent* — messengers, through the land. This inquiry made it known that the dead cattle in every case belonged to himself and other Egyptian owners, and *not one* to the Israelites. The hand of the Lord was here so clearly visible, that the continued "hardness" of the King appears truly marvellous.

II. The Boils and Blains.—V. 8—11. The former plague was upon beasts only; this was also upon men. The Israelites were compelled to labour in the brick-kilns; and now *the ashes of the furnace* — probably of those very brick-kilns—are made the means of a grievous punishment to their oppressors. Compare Deut. iv. 20; 1 Kings viii. 51; Jer. xi. 4. The body was covered over with burning eruptions, or inflammatory swellings; and, though not mortal, it was an excruciating affliction. See Deut. xxviii. 27; Rev. xvi. 2. V. 11. Even the *magicians*, who appear to have been present at all the previous interviews between the King and Moses, were so afflicted with *boils*, that they were unable to *stand before Moses.* They could no longer withstand the servants of Jehovah, though Pharaoh still remained as obstinate as ever.

Reflections.—1. *Unbelief attends to neither general nor particular commands.*—Here is a general one,—"Repent, and believe the Gospel:" who obey it? Here was a particular one, addressed to Pharaoh,—"Let My people go:" how did he regard it?

2. *Unbelief fears neither near nor distant calamities.*—Here was a near one,—"*To-morrow* the Lord shall do this thing:" it failed to dismay King Pharaoh. Here is a distant one,—"The wicked shall be turned into hell:" are *you* afraid of it? They who resolve to sin to-day, are not likely to repent on a death-bed.

3. *Unbelief considers neither ordinary nor miraculous events.*—When there is no difference in outward circumstances between the righteous and the wicked, many remain impenitent, on the plea that "all things come alike to all men." In the Lesson an undeniable difference was made between the Jews and the Egyptians; yet Pharaoh still hardened his heart.

4. *Unbelief equally despises comforts and calamities.*—The former of these plagues left the people free: the latter brought them all into misery. People at ease wonder how Pharaoh could remain stubborn under such calamities. In the days of youth and health we are surprised that the sick and aged, who are so near death, are not religious; but the wonder is that the goodness of God does not lead *us* to repentance. Repentance is much less likely in age and sickness, than in youth and health.

To put off repentance, is to harden the heart against God. Wilful hardness is commonly followed by judicial hardness. God is just; and if you shut your eyes against the light, you may lose the power to open them.

QUESTIONS.—What was the fifth plague? why was it sent? What animals were smitten by it? What was the use of horses? asses? camels? oxen? sheep? Whose cattle were not injured? why? Why was the sixth plague sent? What was it? How was it produced? What was its effect on the magicians?

Illustrations.—I. THE MURRAIN.

See v. 3. "The murrain is a very contagious disease among cattle, the symptoms of which are a hanging down and swelling of the head, abundance of gum in the eyes, rattling in the throat, difficulty of breathing, palpitation of the heart, staggering, a hot breath, and a shining tongue; which symptoms prove that a general inflammation has taken place."—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

II. SPRINKLING ASHES.

See v. 8. "When the magicians pronounce an imprecation on an individual, a village, or a country, they take ashes of cows' dung, or those from a common fire, and throw them in the air, saying to the objects of their displeasure, 'Such a sickness, or such a curse, shall surely come upon you!'"—*Roberts.*

III. THE PLAGUE OF BOILS.

See v. 10. "At the present time forms of smallpox, characterized by great ulcerous inflammation, have fallen with deadly power on many *men* and *beasts*. Whole flocks of sheep have been destroyed by it; and, in one or two localities, many households have been made desolate. The *boil with blains* may not have been identical, but the import of these terms is to be sought in some such violent cutaneous disease."—*Biblical Natural Science.*

MAY 24.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE USE OF THE LAW.—Romans vii. 4—25.

SUMMARY.—The Apostle here describes the transition from a state of nature to a state of grace.

I. DEAD TO THE LAW.—V. 4—6. *Wherefore.*—The word refers to the former verses, which show that Christians are no more bound to the law than a widow is bound to her late husband. *By the body of Christ,*—i.e., through His sacrificial death. See Heb. x. 10. V. 5. *When we were in the flesh,*—i.e., before we believed, and became new creatures. *The motions of sins,*—i.e., sinful "passions;" (Margin;) or, incitements to sin. *Which were by the law.*—Not that the law originates bad desires; but that the carnal mind resents restraint, doing what is forbidden because it is forbidden. V. 6. *Delivered from the law,*—i.e., as the means of our justification, and from its condemnation. *That being dead,*—or, "we being dead to that." (Margin.) See ch. vi. 2. *In newness of spirit.*—In a spiritual manner, or from the heart. *Not in the oldness of the letter.*—Not with a bare outward service.

II. CONVICTED OF SIN.—V. 7—13. Having shown how believers are delivered from the law, the Apostle now looks back to the time when this great change took place, and describes the use of the law in bringing it about. From this point to the end of the chapter he speaks, as of himself, concerning the misery of one who is under the law. What he describes, however, he had himself experienced, in common with all who have obtained deliverance "through Jesus Christ our Lord." V. 7. *Is the law sin?*—The words, "the motions of sins, which were by the law," (v. 5,) might lead some to such an inference. *Had not known sin,*—i.e., that there was such a thing. *Had not known lust,*—i.e., that it is wrong to covet. *But sin,*—the carnal mind. V. 8. *Taking occasion.* &c.—It was irritated by the restraints of the law, and sinned in defiance of it. *Concupiscence,*—evil desire. *Sin was dead.*—It was less active; it incurred no sense of guilt; it produced no fear of danger. V. 9. *I was alive,*—i.e., safe, happy, virtuous, as I thought. *Once,*—i.e., before the law began its work within him. *But when,* &c.,—when the Spirit applied it to the conscience. *Sin revived.*—It was "dead," but now it sprang to life.

And I,—who was "alive," *died*,—i.e., was stripped of all fancied goodness, all heart, all hope. V. 10. *Ordained to life.*—See Lev. xviii. 5; Ezek. xx. 11. *Unto death*,—condemning to wrath. V. 12. *The law is holy*, &c.,—i.e., just and right, and designed for the good of men. V. 13. *Was then*, &c.—Sin, not the law, causes death; but the law, applied to the conscience, exhibits sin as it really is.

III. Enslaved by Sin.—V. 14—20. *Spiritual*,—i.e., given by God who is a Spirit, and requiring spiritual purity. *Carnal*,—subject to the flesh. *Sold*,—as a slave, *under sin*,—or, into the power of sin. V. 15. *I allow not*,—or, "know not." (Margin.) "I am in the dark, I am hurried along, I suffer insolence, I am staggered and struck down, I know not how."—*Chrysostom.* V. 16. *I consent unto the law.*—These desires to obey it testify to its excellency. V. 17. *It is no more I*, &c.,—It is not my reason and conscience, but my corrupt inclinations, which tyrannize over me. V. 18. *To will*,—to desire, or intend to amend.

IV. Distress and Hope.—V. 21—25. *I find then a law*,—explained v. 23, as *the law of sin which is in my members. Law*,—here, means a constraining power. V. 22. *After the inward man*,—i.e., in my mind. "This—*I delight*, &c.—is more than, *I consent unto*, &c., v. 16. The day of liberty draws near."—*Wesley.* The man now admires the beauty of holiness, and longs to be holy. To this the Holy Spirit has brought him, by applying the law to his conscience. V. 24. *Who shall deliver me*, &c.—See Illustration. V. 25. *I thank God*,—who can, and will, deliver for Christ's sake. *So then*, &c.—"The man is now utterly weary of his bondage, and upon the brink of liberty."—*Wesley.* Of his deliverance the next chapter tells.

Reflections.—1. *Sinners hate restraint, and sometimes do wrong, simply because it is wrong.*

2. *True penitents are always humble.*—All who know themselves, know that they are "vile."

3. *Sinners cannot, of themselves, cease from sin.*—They must be pardoned, and born again, and obtain the help of the Holy Spirit, or they will keep on sinning till they perish.

4. *All sinners are deceived.*—Sin promises what it cannot give, and gradually leads men on till they are ruined, before they are aware of it.

5. *Only God, through Christ, can deliver you.*—Thank Him that He can; thank Him that He will; and never rest till you are saved.

Questions.—How are Christians "dead to the law?" How is sin made "known?" How does the law "revive" it? What was the design of the law? How is it perverted? How is the bondage of sin described? What is meant by "another law?" v. 23. What is meant by "the body of this death?" Who can "deliver?" how?

Illustration.—DEAD BODIES BOUND TO CAPTIVES.

See v. 24. The horrible custom here referred to is thus described by Virgil, in his story of the tyrant Mezentius:—

> "The living and the dead, at his command,
> Were coupled face to face, and hand to hand;
> Till, choked with stench, in loathed embraces tied,
> The lingering wretches pined away and died."—*The Æneid.*

MAY 31.—Morning Lesson.

THE SPIRIT GIVEN AT SAMARIA AND EPHESUS.—Acts viii. 14—24; xix. 1—7.

Summary.—Peter and John visit Samaria, where the Holy Spirit is given in answer to their prayers. Simon proposes to purchase the power to impart the Spirit, and Peter unmasks him. Paul finds devout men at Ephesus, upon whom he lays his hands, and they receive the Holy Ghost.

I. At Samaria.—Ch. viii. 14—24. *Samaria*,—the city, not the district, called by that name. *Had received the Word*,—through Philip's preaching. *Sent unto them Peter and John*,—to examine the new converts, and strengthen their faith; and, perhaps,

to show that the Gospel did not countenance the unrelenting hatred which kept Jews and Samaritans apart. V. 16. *As yet He was fallen upon none of them*,—i.e., in His extraordinary influences, such as prophecy, and the gift of tongues. These are evidently intended, for they were such as could be *seen*, v. 18. *Simon*,—the sorcerer, or magician, v. 9, 13. *Offered them money*,—expecting, by means of *this power*, to make money. V. 20. *Peter* denounces both the man and his money with indignation and abhorrence; and shows Simon his great danger. V. 21. *Thy heart is not right*,—i.e., sincere. His proposal proved him a hypocrite. V. 22. *If perhaps.*—The *thought* that the Holy Spirit could be bought *with money* was so exceedingly *wicked*, as to make it questionable whether it could be *forgiven*. Peter's doubt seems to associate this sin with that blasphemy of the Holy Ghost which "hath never forgiveness." See Mark iii. 29. V. 23. Though Simon was baptized, and called a Christian, he was still the slave of his bad passions, — fitly enough described as *bitterness* and *bondage*. The account of him closes abruptly. He was alarmed by Peter's awful words; but whether or not he was a true penitent we cannot say. Compare Exod. ix. 28—30.

II. At Ephesus.—Ch. xix. 1—7. *Came to Ephesus*,—according to promise, ch. xviii. 21. V. 2. *Since ye believed*, — or, rather, "when ye believed?" *We have not*, &c., — or, rather, "we did not so much as hear," &c.,—that is, "He was not mentioned at the time." They had been imperfectly instructed. "They could not," however, "be followers of Moses, or of John the Baptist, without hearing of the Holy Ghost."—*Bengel.* V. 3. *Unto what*, &c.—What did your baptism refer to? *John's baptism*,—i.e., repentance and faith in the coming Saviour. John's baptism is put for what it pointed to. V. 4. *That is, on Christ Jesus.*—He it is of whom John spoke. V. 6. *The Holy Ghost came on them*,—here, as at Samaria, in His miraculous influences.

Reflections.—1. "*Unto what, then, were* ye *baptized?*"—You were dedicated to Christ: do you live to Him? Your baptism typified the Holy Ghost: have you received Him?

2. *Baptism is not the new birth.*—There is a baptism by water, and a baptism by the Spirit. Simon rested content with the former. "Ye must be born again."

3. *Faith in Jesus brings the gift of the Spirit.*—His ordinary influences remain in the Church. The Holy Spirit regenerates, comforts, strengthens, guides, and sanctifies believers; and all who have received Him, know it.

Questions.—What did the Apostles hear? Who went to Samaria? why? Who had been there before them? How did they receive the Holy Ghost? Who was Simon? What did he propose? How did Peter answer him? How many disciples did Paul find at Ephesus? What did he ask? What did they answer? What did they mean? Unto what were they baptized? What does this mean? What were the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit? What are His ordinary gifts?

Illustration.—SIMONY.

See ch. viii. 18—20. The name of Simon Magus is branded with perpetual infamy. When worldly profit is given or offered, taken, or demanded, for spiritual things, such as Church rights, privileges, or benefits, the crime is called *simony*,—after Simon, who wished to procure a spiritual power with money.

The remaining Lesson for May will be given in the next Number.

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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

"SHOOTERS, BUT NOT HITTERS."

"ANY one who could shoot would have settled the fortune of the day by half-a-dozen shots; but both the traders' people and my men were shooters, but not hitters." So Sir Samuel Baker writes in accounting for the protracted character of one of many perilous encounters which befell him and his party on the way to the discovery of the Nile source in Lake Nyanza.

Might not something like this be written as truly accounting for the disproportion, which, in many departments of Christian service, obtains between work done and results gained? In the pulpit, in the tract-district, in the Sunday-school, are there not very many of us who are "shooters, but not hitters?" Taking the country through, what an immense amount of time, thought, money, and action, is expended weekly on these three forms of evangelical occupation; but how small a proportion of it appears to be successful!

Let us now look especially at Sunday-school work, and its results. Beneficial to some extent it undoubtedly is,—so far so, that to suspend it would never be thought of by those who judge fairly as to what comes of it, and who desire the spread of Christianity,—but after all, is it adequately so? Think of the vast numbers of scholars actually assembled for instruction every Sunday, and of the thousands of persons engaged as their teachers, and can the results achieved—even when computed on the scale which the most sanguine advocates and expectants would adopt—be accepted contentedly as all that ought to be looked for? After all allowances are made for the way in which the obduracy of the human heart, and the malicious craft of Satan, may defeat the best-aimed endeavours, must we not conclude that very much of what goes forward in our schools is but the mere ado of work, instead of the actual and effective doing it? Painstaking, intelligent, faithful, and successful, we know that many of our teachers are; but is it not equally certain that many who take charge of classes are only like Sir S. Baker's men,—"Shooters, but not hitters?"

It seems almost a truism, to say that to be *called* "a teacher" is one thing, and that to *be* a teacher is another; but is not the former what too many seem to content themselves with? They devote the

time, and go through the round of attendance and so forth, which are required to entitle them to that name; but they fall short of accomplishing what would constitute them what they are called. They evidently like to have the credit of doing a Sunday-school teacher's work; it is accounted praiseworthy and honourable, and it is gratifying to be accredited with undertaking it. A certain amount of the applause earned for the institution by more competent workers, accrues to less competent ones from mere association with them in it. Many indeed, who never succeed in the highest sense, would be really pleased if they did; and are sorry not to be able to report results such as others tell of. These unsuccessful persons would be uneasy at the thought of withdrawing entirely from the work; to do it somehow, yields them pleasure; or to seem to do it prevents rebukes of conscience which would trouble them if they did nothing. They could hardly be content not to "shoot," but they become content to be "shooters, and not hitters." We do not suppose that the teachers who read these pages are the most likely to be found in this category,—quite the contrary,—we may, however, be saying what some of the more efficient teachers may be glad to commend to the attention of their less diligent and satisfactory fellow-workers.

Surely every person consenting to undertake the work of a teacher should do so with a clear and definite purpose, to the accomplishment of which he intends to devote and direct his efforts. The object for which the institution exists is that for which he ought to work; and to contribute to that object in its several branches, should be his persistent endeavour. It ought to be clearly before him whenever he enters the school. He should never leave it contentedly when he has only filled up the school-hours by taking his scholars through a certain round of prescribed occupation. The main aim of the Sunday-school is, avowedly, so to teach and enforce the Scriptures that the scholars may be saved,—that their characters may become Christ-like, and that they may be taught and trained for duty in the world and in the Church. It is obvious that a teacher may go, Sunday after Sunday, and sit in a class Bible in hand, and occupy the tongues and ears of the scholars with its contents, without bringing them so to bear on their hearts and consciences as to make them likely to yield the results just named. The appointed lesson may have been read, difficulties in it may have been explained, the doctrines contained in it may have been spoken of, many interesting things may have been said about it,—nevertheless, the main point which should have been aimed at may have been missed, no precept

in it having been so enforced as to arouse the consciences of the scholars, and no such use having been made of its facts as to evoke their love to God, or to strengthen their trust in the Saviour, or to impress them with the solemnity of eternal things. To have done so, might not have required much additional skill or energy: to "shoot" so as to "hit" may require very little, if any, more ammunition or effort on the part of the marksman, but only his earnest and well-calculated aim. To enable him to take such an aim, there must of course have been some preparatory painstaking on his part, which would have been prompted by an anxiety to be able to be a "hitter" as well as a "shooter." And no Sunday-school teacher is likely to be successful in his work unless he be earnestly resolved that he will, by God's help, be so. Such a resolution can only be really begotten by love to Christ; and in proportion as that increases in his heart, will the resolve become more settled and vigorous.

Suffer a word or two of exhortation, then, fellow-labourers in the Sunday-school. Form and cherish a high estimate of the dignity and importance of your work; it is scarcely possible to over-rate the beneficial results which would come of it if it were all thoroughly done. Do not be content to teach without results, nor without seeing them. Labour for and expect immediate success, while so far willing to wait as is needful to enable you to go on in your well-doing, neither "weary" of it, nor "faint" in it. Deal with your scholars one by one; ply them with personal appeals, the earnestness and affection of which they shall be compelled both to see and to feel. Study to say what cannot be heard with indifference; what, having been heard cannot be forgotten. Pray for, and cultivate, power to speak sentences which shall be as "goads" and "nails;" and may "the Lord work with" you, and "confirm" your "word," and recompense you with plenteous fruit. B.

THE DUTIES OF A SUPERINTENDENT.

Like the great Apostle, a Superintendent should be able to say, with humility, and yet with confidence,—"Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ." Let the Superintendent seek to be an ensample to the teachers, "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity;" and if by the grace of God he is enabled so to be, his fellow-labourers will turn to him with the trust which we can suppose Timothy would repose in St. Paul; and they will accord to him a power which he will never be tempted to abuse, because to it every one of his teachers will yield a hearty and loving obedience. And, in matters of a less serious nature, but by no means unimportant in themselves, it is easy to understand that if a Superintendent

comes behind his teachers in knowledge, in zeal, in punctuality, and in earnestness, that school will, sooner or later, suffer. Let the Superintendent not only *take* the head, but *be* at the head. During the war in the Crimea one of the ensigns ran forward, and carried our flag right up into the teeth of a Russian battalion. The commanding officer, noticing the daring act, shouted out, "Bring the flag back to the men." "Nothing of the sort," was the dauntless reply; "let the men come up to the flag." Let the Superintendent, we say, carry his banner well in front, and let his teachers follow up to the flag.

And now a word or two on the duties of the Superintendent.

1. Need we say, that *in the details of the school he takes a practical interest?* —He will refuse to begin the service should he notice the forms in disorder, and will insist on their being evenly and properly placed. He considers the appearance of the school worthy of his attention, and anything out of place is a sort of eyesore which must be removed before he can be at rest. He will object to any arrangement of the children in the class, which is not consistent with order and discipline; and he will endeavour to enlist each teacher into sympathy with the Apostolic rule, "Let *all* things be done decently and in order."

2. *The Superintendent must be a disciplinarian.*—The discipline of a school is a most important question. The comfort of the teachers, and the instruction of the children, depend, in a large measure, on its maintenance. Upon what plan, then, is a Superintendent to maintain discipline? How is he to be kind and approachable, without being too familiar? How is he to insist on prompt and hearty obedience, and, at the same time, gain the confidence of the school? Can he be firm without creating a servile fear? These are the problems which a Superintendent has to solve. And they admit of a solution. We believe that all a Superintendent has to do is to insist firmly and decisively upon an implicit obedience in the first instance, —to do this once for all; and he need have but little difficulty afterwards with respect to maintenance of discipline. First determine what you want. Do not make your rules unnecessarily severe or irksome; but when they are once made, see that they are unflinchingly carried out. Never condone an offence before the school; and if you have to punish, do it thoroughly. Let the children see that you are master, and they will learn to obey. One bad boy, with the idea that he can do as he likes, can be the plague of the whole school. A judicious Superintendent loses no time in teaching that boy his duty, and putting him into his proper place. No school can, in any sense of the word, prosper, where rules are set at defiance, and the teachers are at the mercy of the children. Begin with obedience; and when the school has learnt this lesson, then the Superintendent can afford to let the children enjoy a wholesome and cheerful liberty, but not before. Discipline should be regulated on such a principle that the Superintendent can, at any time, without a violent effort, bring the school under control. He should have the children at a word. His orders should meet with an immediate response. Like the steersman in a boat, he should be able, the moment the school heads away from the mark, to bring it up again by the slightest touch of the helm. His duty is quietly to regulate. He will avoid everything that approaches to scolding and blustering. "In quietness and confidence will be his strength." He will not be always jerking at the reins, but the school should, nevertheless, be conscious that he has them in hand.

3. We think, in *all cases where punish-*

ment must be administered, the person to do it is the Superintendent.—Unenviable position! Let the teacher wait on his teaching. It is the Superintendent's place to punish, if punishment be necessary.

The comfort of teaching in a well-ordered school must be apparent. Let the Superintendent, therefore, see that the teachers have no cause for complaint on this ground,—that the school is under no discipline. *Discipline is the rails on which the school runs*, and you might as well expect a railway-train to go smoothly when off the line as to suppose that any school can get along without discipline. It is as the engine is kept on the rails that all goes well. There it is as easily controlled as a child. The driver regulates and directs its speed as he chooses. Once off the rail, all is confusion and disorder. So it is with a school: kept on the rail of discipline, it will do its work. Let it, on the contrary, run off this line, and you will do little or no good.

4. The Superintendent will *study the character of both his scholars and his teachers;* and with this object, that he may fit the one to the other.—It is a mistake to place a stubborn boy with a hasty teacher, and to pack the class of a sanguine, sensitive teacher with dull or bad boys. There is such a thing as accommodating teacher and children each to each. There are some boys and some teachers who will never get on together. They remind one of Dr. Chalmers and his horse. The Doctor, having bought the horse, found in a short time that it was necessary to part with him, for the animal had learnt the trick of throwing the Doctor; and at last it came to such a pass, that the horse had to be sold. The difficulty was to find a purchaser, as the Doctor's conscience would not permit him to conceal the faults of the horse. Eventually, however, a friend was persuaded to take the charger in return for a copy of the "Saints' Rest." On inquiring, some time after, how the horse was liked, the Doctor was not a little astonished at being told that there never was a better one. The key to the mystery was in the Doctor's awkward manner of riding. There are teachers who ride awkwardly, and there are children who do not like it. The Superintendent can help both by a change of class.—*The Church Sunday-School Magazine.*

EARLY CONVERSIONS.

The moment children are capable of sinning—breaking God's law—that moment they are capable of repenting, of turning to God, of understanding the doctrines and precepts of the Bible, repentance, faith, and a holy life. Children, taught as they should be from early infancy, know and feel "that it is an evil and bitter thing" to sin against God, and that wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

"Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

A young lady in a Sabbath-school, a short time since, asked her class how soon a child should give its heart to God. One little girl said, "When thirteen years old;" another, "ten," another, "six." Then, at length, the last child in the class spoke: "Just as soon as we know who God is."

"I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me." (Prov. viii. 17.) Parent, where is your faith? "According to your faith be it unto you." "All things are possible to him that believeth." "Seek . . first," for your little ones, "the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all . . things shall be added unto you."

Samuel was a little child when he ministered unto the Lord, and heard His voice. "And he grew, and the Lord was with him:" and "the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh."

Paul, speaking of little Timothy, says, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

These are examples left on record by the Spirit of grace, to teach us what may be done, in the strength and wisdom of the Most High. The Holy Spirit never strives more powerfully than in early childhood.

The late Countess of Huntingdon was only a little child when she gave her heart to Christ; and she was not only rich in this world, but eminently "rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom." Who can read the early conversion and life of the wife of President Edwards, and doubt her being a child of God? or the thrilling narrative which is given of Phebe Bartlett, a child but five years old? For seventy years she testified to God's love in revealing Himself to a child. In the late memoirs of the Rev. Dr. Justin Edwards, it is stated that the heavenly conversation and Christian spirit manifested in her last sickness, were the means of spiritual life to this eminent servant of Christ.

One who has long been a "mother in Israel," and whose deep spirituality and holy life has given her an extended influence of the happiest kind, was wont to say, "she could not remember the time when she did not love Christ, and find her greatest delight in doing His will." In her life and in her death she has given the most satisfactory evidence of religion, pure and undefiled.

SPEAK GENTLY.

It is a great mistake to suppose that what will make a child stare or tremble, impresses with authority. The violent emphasis, the hard, stormy voice, the menacing air, only weaken authority. It commands a good thing as if it were only a bad, and fit to be in no way impressed, save by some stress of assumption. Let the command be always given quietly, as if it had some right in itself, and could utter itself to the conscience by some emphasis of its own. Is it not well understood that a bawling and violent teamster has no real government of his team? Is it not practically seen that a skilful commander of one of those huge floating cities, moved by steam on our American waters, manages and works every motion by the waving of a hand, or *by signs that pass in silence;* issuing no order at all, save in the *gentlest undertone of voice?* So, when there is, or is to be, a real order and law in the house, it will come of no hard and boisterous, or fretful, and termagant way of commandment. *Gentleness* will speak the word of firmness, and firmness will be clothed in the airs of true gentleness. —*Dr. Bushnell.*

WHAT TO DO WITH AN UNRULY SCHOLAR.

If there be a child in a class who is rude, and to whom it seems as if it were impossible to do any good, the teacher ought not to call the Superintendent to the class, and say, "Look here, I want you to take this boy out of my class: I cannot do anything with him." That will only make him worse; and some very rough boys have characteristics which will make them very useful if they are converted. They may be desperately wicked; but the Lord Jesus can change their heart. If a teacher should ask what to do with an unruly boy, I would reply, "Conquer him with love." Let him call on him during the week, or in some other way give him to feel that he is deeply anxious for his salvation. Let him pray not only for him, but with him; and, if he gets him on his knees in that way, it will not be long before his hard heart will yield. The very worst of boys have been conquered by such means as these.

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

RAGGED FEEDING SCHOOLS.

Mr. George Holland, the indefatigable Ragged-school teacher in George-yard, Whitechapel, has for some time been attempting to do in a small way what Dr. Guthrie tells us is done on a larger scale in Edinburgh. In Edinburgh the children come to the school at half-past seven in the morning, when they get a breakfast. Then prayers are said, then they have a lesson, and, after half an hour of play, they are employed in various trades for two hours. Afterwards they have dinner, receive a religious lesson, and again go to work till seven o'clock, when they have supper, and go home. Dr. Guthrie has recently been advocating the establishment of what he calls "Industrial Feeding Schools" in impoverished districts, urging that, in thus employing money, benevolent people would secure its not being abused. In such schools every shilling would go to buy food and warm clothing for the hungry child; and there its intellect would be developed, and its heart improved, and have instilled into it the elements and principles of Christianity. We see it stated that the ladies who manage the Girls' Industrial School in Belfast have no difficulty in raising sufficient funds to provide three substantial meals a day, besides suitable clothing for the girls attending their school. The scheme has also been tried by the committee of the St. Giles' Refuges, who have inaugurated a series of children's dinners for the destitute inmates of the various Ragged-schools, several of which have been held at their Refuge in Great Queen-street.

After a visit to George-yard, Whitechapel, we were more deeply impressed than ever with the wisdom of Dr. Guthrie's words, that, although London has already accomplished much, there is great need for a much larger number of Ragged Feeding Schools. To propose to teach a child his A B C when he comes in the morning without breakfast, cold and hungry, without giving him a good substantial meal, is a perfect mockery. The schoolroom in George-yard is a dingy, but lofty building, well adapted for the purpose to which it is applied. It is fitted up with lavatories and baths, to which the little "waifs and strays" repair upon coming to school; so that, however ragged their clothes may be, their faces and hands are clean and shining. Mr. Holland has the entire charge of the school; but he is ably assisted by a young girl who was trained in George-yard, and who has now become an expert and valuable teacher. Every day between four and five hundred children assemble. They come in every kind of raggedness, and many, very many, both boys and girls, are shoeless. When a comb or brush has been used it is impossible to tell. Some are better clothed than others; but the majority of those in the school have been provided with garments by Mr. Holland, who is continually receiving parcels of left-off clothing, for which he is very thankful. It may be mentioned that, in addition to the week-day, there are Sunday and evening, schools, with which there are about one thousand children connected. Besides these there is a good work being carried on amongst the adult population, for whom there are religious services, prayer-meetings, open-air gatherings, lodging-house services, and Bible-classes. It need scarcely be said that the neighbourhood is one in which a great work needs to be done, abounding, as the locality does, in vice and profligacy of the worst description.

Mr. Holland began his work of feeding those who attended his school during the winter of 1854; but he has no statistics so far back. Since November, 1867, to March 6th, 1868, however, he

computes that thirty-four thousand meals have been given to children. These meals consist of rice and sugar, rice and molasses, soup and bread, boiled pork and beef, bread and treacle, bread only. On the day of our visit the dinner was rice and sugar. We arrived at the school about dinner-time, and had an opportunity of seeing not only a mass of hungry children waiting to be fed, but the perfect discipline which Mr. Holland has introduced amongst them. As it was play-hour, there was no check placed upon their clamour; they were allowed to make as much noise as they liked, and to amuse themselves as best they could. At two o'clock, however, a bell tinkled, and there was instant silence. Their teacher put them through a little drilling exercise; and then, in a reverential tone, they repeated after him the prayer with which the afternoon-school was opened. When this exercise was concluded, in regular order they filed up to a table, from which the dinner was served out. Each child received a large tin mug of boiled rice, with a good spoonful of brown sugar in the middle of it. They did not so much eat their dinner as devour it, leaving no doubt of their hungry and starving condition. Many of the children had had no food all day, and some of them had been two days without food! Is not this a work, then, in which Mr. Holland should be generously supported? Hitherto he has had no reason to complain of the amount of assistance he has received. Help has come to him in the strangest ways possible: in those ways which only those who wait upon Providence can understand. He feels that the work in which he is engaged is not his own, but God's; and to Him he looks for the means by which to carry it on.

The children are all very happy in school, and make considerable progress during the short time they are able to attend. They learn to read, write, and cipher, and acquire something of geography and history. They read the Bible every day, and religious instruction may be said to be the best and most interesting instruction they receive. We heard fifty or sixty little boys give answers to Bible-questions with a readiness which could not have been surpassed in schools of a superior character. —*Christian Times.*

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

A PHYSICIAN AND HIS LITTLE BOY.

At a meeting held in the court-house of a town in the State of Illinois, there was present a physician, a man of learning, but an infidel, who disbelieved Jesus Christ, and mocked at those who followed Him. He was sitting on one of the back-seats of the house, holding upon his knee his little son, about eight years old.

After the sermon, the Minister gave out that if any present felt that they were sinners, and wished to be saved and happy Christians, they might come and sit on a front seat, for instruction and prayer. Instantly the litttle boy slipped from his father's arms.

"Where are you going, child," said his father.

"To sit on that seat," resolutely replied the boy.

"What for?" inquired his father, holding him back.

"Because I wish to share in the prayers of Christians."

The father tried to prevent him, but to no purpose; and the decided child went forward, and took his place among those who were seeking forgiveness, and peace, and shelter in the gracious presence of the Good Shepherd and gentle Saviour.

When the meeting was ended, and they had returned to their homes, the boy asked his father if he should pray for him?

"You can't pray," was the reply.

"Yes, I can."

"But you cannot pray for me."

"Yes, father, I can; the Saviour has given me a heart to pray."

"Well, then," replied his father, "if you can pray for me, you may."

They knelt down together. Jesus had given the child a "heart to pray." The grace of Christ had revealed to him things which his father knew nothing of. The Christian child was wiser than the infidel parent. In simplicity and faith, the boy told the Lord about his father, and besought Him to teach him the right way, and cause him to believe and be saved.

And that little one's prayer availed, as all the prayers of the righteous do, whether they come from childish lips, or are spoken by aged tongues. By it the strong man was convinced and converted, when no arguments of wisdom could have overcome him.

This fact may show how much power children possess, and how important a place in the world every Christian child has to fill. Whatever relates to our souls is very important. God has some soul-work for every child to do, who has been called to serve Him.—*The Christian.*

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FLOWERS.

HENCE! shades of sadness! Let me kiss the flowers!
They glad my heart like sunshine, or the' embrace
Of guileless infancy, or a sweet face,—
Childlike and pure. Could Eden's emerald-bowers
Boast brighter gems than summer round us showers?
So richly wrought in various form and hue,
Scented with breath of heaven, and clad with dew?
O! I could peer into their lips for hours,
And ever meet an answering smile! "Behold
The lilies of the field!" Not Ophir's gold
Would buy such beauty! For these love-gifts fair
Accept my lowly thanks, Thou who hast laid
The earth's foundations, and its bosom made
To blush with cheerful blooms, sweet foes of care.

Bagslate, near Rochdale. M. T.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

June 14.—SECTION V., QUESTION II.

A Dreadful Foretaste.

A YOUNG man was dying. He had only reached his twenty-sixth year, but vice had done its terrible work; and he must die. He was also penniless, and dependent on strangers. There was a time when he had a happy home with his godly parents; but he had forsaken that quiet refuge, had trampled under foot the law of God, had led others into sin, and was now dying in wretchedness and despair. He had been guilty of drunkenness, fraud, gambling, and other sins. Many had reason to mourn that they had ever become acquainted with him. He had, however, been generally regarded as a merry fellow, and a jovial companion. It may be desirable to ponder a few of his latest expressions:—"I have

not known one hour of peace since I left the paths of virtue, and for two or three years I have been utterly wretched. O, that I had never been born! You can pray for me; but it is of no use. You are very kind; I thank you all: but you cannot save me. My soul is damned! the seal of reprobation is already upon me."

June 21.—Sect. V., Quest. III.

The Maidservant's Book.

A lady had just returned from a party to her own house. She had spent several hours in playing at cards, and in other worthless amusements. Her conscience had testified that some of her doings were altogether sinful; but other persons engaged, with apparent delight, in those pursuits, so she reasoned that there could be no great harm therein. She entered a room where one of the maidservants was seated reading. Either the lady moved very softly, or the young woman was much interested in the volume, for the lady's entrance was not perceived. She had previously observed that the maid generally looked somewhat serious, and she became curious to know what sort of books she read. The lady, therefore, stepped towards the maid very gently, and looked over her shoulder. One word so arrested her attention, that she could not forget it: all night long she wept and prayed. That word was the means of leading her to Christ, so that she found mercy: it was, "Eternity!"

June 28.—Sect. V., Quest. IV.

The Last Message.

The message was from a young girl to her mother. It was a very delightful one, though sent under very solemn circumstances. The mother was in her quiet home in England: the girl was on board the ill-fated ship "London." On New Year's-day, 1866, the vessel had sailed from the Nore; and, when a few days had elapsed, she was in the Bay of Biscay, and ready to founder. All hope was gone. Some of the people on board were getting into a boat; it was just possible that these might be saved, but only few could have even this slight chance. The dear girl was not of that number. She knew that in a very short time—most likely in a few minutes—she must go down beneath those wild waves. But there was the possibility of sending a message to the mother she so fondly loved, and who would be heart-broken at her loss. So she hurriedly wrote a few words on a slip of paper, and said to one who was leaping into the boat, "Give this to my mother." That sorrowing woman received this cheering message:—"Dear mother, you must not grieve for me: I am going to Jesus."

July 5.—Sect. V., Quest. V.

John P. James.

The Rev. J. P. James was called to the heavenly rest when many were anticipating on his behalf a prolonged period of earthly service, marked by more than ordinary devotedness and success. Twelve months were not allowed to elapse between his ordination and his burial. Over-exertion, debility, the rupture of a blood-vessel, and rapid consumption quickly followed each other. When his end was drawing nigh, the question was asked, "Do you find Christ as precious to you as you ever expected to find Him?" Mr. James had often been exceedingly happy in Jesus. His highest joys had long been in fellowship with Christ. He had seemed to those around, to have more of the light and glory than most believers; but he was now anticipating the "fulness of joy," and was, doubtless, enabled to catch glimpses of the Heavenly Zion. He replied: "Yes, except in the depths of eternity." A few minutes before he entered into his rest, he sang, in sweet tones, the hymn concluding:—

"Jesus, my Strength, my Life, my Rest,
On Thee will I depend,
Till summon'd to the marriage-feast,
When faith in sight shall end."

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

June 14.—Section VIII., Questions I. and II.

God's Message Learned.

The message graciously provided.—Christ's Apostles were enabled to perform many wonderful miracles in order to convince their hearers that they were messengers from God; such as healing the lame man at the beautiful gate, raising Dorcas to life, and giving strength to the cripple at Lystra, "who had never walked." (Acts iii., ix., xiv.) These Apostles claimed to declare, with Divine authority, the plan of salvation; and ascribed similar authority to the ancient prophets: "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets,

and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Peter iii. 2.) "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." (1 John iv. 6.) "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 8.)

The message diligently studied.—The Rev. John Wesley wrote as follows:—"I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing,—the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a Book. O give me that Book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it! here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one Book."

The message Divinely explained.—When the Lord Jesus had uttered the parable of the tares sown by an enemy, the disciples did not fully comprehend its meaning. They asked for an explanation. To whom did they apply? Of course it was reasonable that they should ask Jesus. Even among men it is supposed that an author is generally best able to make plain the meaning of his own words. (Matt. xiii. 36.) Did Jesus promise "another Comforter" to explain the Scriptures? Who is that other Comforter?

EXERCISES.—Has God sent a message to us? What is it chiefly concerning? In what Book may it be found? In what two ways may I become acquainted with the Bible? Who will explain to my heart what I read and hear? How am I to seek the help of God's Spirit?

June 21.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. III.

God's Message Revered.

LEARN the reply, and the first of the appended verses. Let us then think how ready we ought to be to receive every lesson which God is pleased to teach us, and how unhesitatingly we may confide in every Divine declaration. Unless we have such docility and faith, we are not likely to profit by God's Word, however many sermons we may hear, or however many chapters we may read. Many of the Jews, in the days of our Lord, were very proud because God's Book had been specially committed to the care of their nation. Did they all profit by those ancient oracles? Many worldly-minded persons often listened to the teaching of Christ; were they all saved?

We must cherish a docile spirit.—Saul of Tarsus needed the convincing and converting grace of God. He was led astray by his prejudices and pride; but when he was convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the Son of God, he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6.) Very likely he expected that the Lord Jesus would Himself, and at once, give him the needful direction. He was ready to do anything commanded; but his docility was to be further tested. He was told to go into Damascus, and wait. That was trying; but there was another test. He was to be taught the way of salvation, not by a voice from heaven, but by that of a Christian disciple, whom he would have spurned from him the day before. But Saul was docile; so he obtained mercy.

We must cherish a believing spirit.—Whilst the Israelites were in the wilderness, some of them were sent across Jordan as spies. How many were sent? Most of them doubted the word of God. They would have believed that He would bring them into the possession of Canaan, had not the men of the land been warlike. As it was, they did not believe Him. Of how many of the twelve is this true? These ten men caused the people generally to doubt and disobey. What were the names of the faithful two? Did Caleb and Joshua enter the promised land? Did any of the ten? (Num. xiii., xiv.)

EXERCISES.—Do we need instruction concerning a few subjects or many? If we are self-confident, shall we be likely to learn? Ought we to believe whatever God affirms? What will be the results if we prove unteachable and unbelieving?

June 28.—Sect. VIII., Quest. III.

(*Concluded.*)

God's Message Obeyed.

We must obey God, though greatly perplexed.—It may sometimes happen that we can see no reason why God should require us to act in certain ways which He directs; but it must be sufficient for us to know that the Lord has spoken. Soon after the Israelites had crossed the river Jordan they arrived near a city. They were directed to march round that city once a day, during six days; and on the seventh day they were to march round it seven times. What was the name of the city? The children of Israel desired possession of Jericho; but they could not get into the place, because of the high walls built about it. Was it likely that they would ever get in by marching round it? Seven priests, each with a ram's horn made into a trumpet, were to walk before the men of war. These priests were to blow with their trumpets. Did it seem likely that the walls would be overthrown in that manner? Would it have been right for the Israelites to refuse to go round Jericho? What happened "on the seventh day?" (Josh. vi. 1—20.)

We must obey God, though painfully tried.—A good man was once directed to offer up his only son as a burnt offering to God. What was the good man's name? What was the name of his son? The sacrifice was to take place on a mountain. In what land was the mountain situated? Would not this prove a very painful trial to Abraham? He loved Isaac very much, and would have been very sorry to lose him by death in any form; but to think of taking away Isaac's life himself must have been heart-rending. Did Abraham obey God? On the day they were to start for the land of Moriah, did Abraham rise early or late? By rising betimes he manifested his ready obedience. What happened at the mount? (Gen. xxii.)

We must obey God, though severely persecuted.—Soon after our Lord's ascension, two of his Apostles healed a lame man near one of the Temple gates. What were their names? Peter and John were put into prison. The Jewish rulers threatened them, and commanded them never again to speak of Jesus. Would it have been right for the Apostles to have obeyed these men? What did they reply? (Acts iv. 19.)

Exercises.—Do good men always know the reason of God's commands? Is it right to neglect God's injunctions if we cannot explain why they have been given? Does obedience often require self-denial? In what manner are good people sometimes persecuted in our days? Are God's laws to be always obeyed?

July 5.—Section VIII., Question IV.

God's Message Remembered.

God's Word, if duly prized, will furnish instruction.—Paul and Silas, while engaged in preaching Christ's Gospel, came to Thessalonica. The Jews in that city were very bigoted. They bitterly opposed the Apostles; and, at length, succeeded in driving them away. Paul and Silas went to another city, where many of the Jews gave them a more suitable reception. What was the name of that city? The Bereans did not at once acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah. They knew that many of their chief teachers affirmed that He was an impostor. They took time, therefore, to consider this important question, "Is Jesus the Christ?" but they rightly employed the time. They did not loiter, as though the question was of no moment; they did not act as though they wished for an excuse for procrastination; they "searched" God's Word. (Acts xvii. 11.)

God's Word, if duly prized, will impart strength.—David, for the most part, was a faithful servant of the Most High. He was enabled to do the Lord's will under difficult circumstances, and to resist temptation when it was plausibly urged, and enforced by powerful inducements. On two occasions he spared the life of Saul, although he knew that that wicked king was doing his utmost to bring about his death; and that it was probable, if Saul were removed, he would be raised to the throne of Israel. (1 Sam. xxiv., xxvi.) Indeed, in many cases David was wonderfully preserved from sin. This is, to a great extent, explained when we read what he affirmed concerning Divine truths: "More to be desired are they than gold," &c.; "Moreover by them is

Thy servant warned," &c. (Psalm xix. 10, 11.)

God's Word, if duly prized, will provide comfort.—What servant of God was specially honoured during the Babylonish captivity? Daniel was an inspired prophet. He was employed to write an important portion of God's Word. Yet we find that, even in his old age, he was carefully studying Divine truth as written by others, and obtaining comfort therefrom. Jeremiah's writings were thus blessed to him. (Dan. ix. 2.)

Exercises.—Are we in danger of allowing bad thoughts to lodge in our memories? From what Book may the best thoughts be obtained? If we never think of the lessons of God's Word, what will become of us? What blessings do good people gain by remembering those lessons?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Naimbanna.

An African prince, called Naimbanna, was brought to England in 1791, under the care of some godly people. They were very desirous that this African should become a thorough Christian. They were anxious that his own heart should be fully yielded to the Saviour, and that he should be so largely instructed in Scripture truth, as to be of service to his countrymen when he returned to Africa. Among the subjects of study placed before him, were the Evidences of Christianity. The good men in whose charge Naimbanna was, desired that he might fully believe the truth of our holy religion, and might also be able to convince others. The prince did, happily, yield himself to God, and paid diligent attention to all the instruction given. But it was soon apparent that the external evidences of Christianity were not needed in order to convince the African himself. He listened, learned, and was profited. But his mind had evidently been fully satisfied before this kind of proof, from miracles and prophecies, was produced. He was asked how this firm conviction, that the Bible was really God's Word, was first formed within his soul. He replied: "When I found, in Sierra-Leone, in England, everywhere, all good men minding the Bible, and calling it the Word of God, and all bad men disregarding or disliking it, I then was sure that the Bible must be the Word of God." (No. II. *June* 14.)

A Slave-Girl Listening.

When Christian Missionaries first went to South Africa, they found great difficulty in obtaining leave to preach to the black people who were held in slavery there. The Dutch farmers were especially opposed to the introduction of the Gospel among their negroes. These farmers were very hospitable among each other; few of them, however, received a Missionary very kindly. If even they suffered him to preach to them and their families, the slaves were seldom permitted to hear. A slave-girl became impressed with her need of the Saviour. She had, providentially, heard enough to show her something concerning her sinfulness, and the goodness of God. But she knew very little; and, though Missionaries were occasionally allowed to stay a short time at her master's house, and would gladly have preached to the slaves, they were not permitted to do so. But the slave-girl wanted to be taught. She really wished to know God's will concerning her, and, especially, how she might be saved from her sins, and so be happy for ever. She knew it would be no use for her to ask to go into the parlour when the Missionary was there talking to the white people; but the slave-girl must hear somehow: so she lay down flat in the passage, near to the parlour-door, and placed her ear close to the bottom of the door. She only heard a very little; but she heard something, and pondered that within her soul. Another Missionary arrived, and the slave-girl again laid herself down in the passage, and heard a few words additional. So she found her way to Jesus, and her soul was made happy. Forty years afterwards she was in better circumstances: she then told the Rev. Barnabas Shaw how she had been led to the Cross; that Christ was still precious; and that she hoped soon to go home to heaven. There were meekness and faith in her listening. (No. II. *June* 21.)

The Five-pound Note.

A large fair, for the transaction of business, had been held in the city of Exeter. Among those who had been present was a godly tradesman, whose name was Mr. Samuel Potter. The good man had bought and sold as he thought best, and had then returned to his home at Culmstock. When he endeavoured to balance his accounts, he found a difficulty. He had in his possession four pounds more than he could account for. A note proved to be for five pounds which he had expected to be only for one. Had it proved such, his accounts would have been exactly correct; but the note was for five pounds, and Mr. Potter could not alter it, if even he had desired so to do. How could it be? He must have received the note from some

one when transacting business. It had been given and received as of the value of one pound only. After careful deliberation, Mr. Potter felt convinced that he must have received the note from a man whose form and features he recollected, but of whose name and residence he knew nothing. Still the man might know that his name was Potter, and that he lived at Culmstock; if he did, and he had given the note for one of inferior value, he would, doubtless, apply to have it exchanged. But no application was made during the ensuing twelve months. Mr. Potter retained the note until the fair was held in Exeter the ensuing year; he then went to it, taking the note with him. He saw, amid the crowd, the man to whom he supposed the note to belong: the man, on being addressed, recollected the business-transaction of the previous year, but was not aware of any over-payment on his part, or, indeed, of any mistake whatever. Mr. Potter maintained that the four pounds were not his; the stranger was unwilling to receive the money. Eventually, the sum was equally divided between them, and Mr. Potter returned home comforted by the thought that he had done all in his power to correct the mistake. He had heard God's Word with the determination to obey its teachings. (No. II. *June* 28.)

The Lad's Bible Burned.

An Irish lad, whose parents were Romanists, had, through a gracious Providence, learned to read; and had obtained a Bible. He found great pleasure in reading God's Word; and, by means of it, was led to the Saviour. The Romish priest observed that a great change had come over the youth, and was determined to find out the cause. He at length discovered that he had a Bible, and constantly read it; the priest endeavoured, by threats, promises, and bribes, to induce him to give up the sacred volume; but all was in vain. At length he persuaded the lad to go to his house, and take his Bible with him, that they might read it and talk over its contents. Watching his opportunity, the priest snatched the Bible, flung it on the fire, and held the youth until the volume was reduced to ashes. The lad was greatly distressed; yet, in a little time, smiled. "What are you smiling at?" "I was smiling from joy that you could not burn the chapters I have committed to memory." (No. II. *July* 5.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

June 7.—Vowing and Paying.

Psalm xxii. 25: "I will pay my vows."

1. *On promising.*—Do you know what it is to promise? Children soon learn this. Father, or mother, or friends say that something shall be given, or some pleasure had, on a future day; this is *promising*. And children sometimes make promises to parents and playfellows; but are promises always kept? Have you never been disappointed? Sometimes we *cannot* keep our promises even when we wish and try to do so; but more often they are *forgotten*, or *no care* is taken to keep them. This is deceitful, and is therefore wrong, even to a schoolfellow: it is much worse when done to a parent. Hear, now, about,—

2. *Vowing.*—A vow is a kind of promise: it is a solemn promise made to God, or made to do something by His help. The Bible speaks much of vows, and of how they should be kept. Jacob vowed to give part of all he had to God, for His great kindness and mercy to him. A good mother once vowed to give her little son to the Lord, that he might be His servant for ever. She took him, when a child, to the Temple, and he became a priest and a prophet in Israel. Who was the child? David and many others vowed to the Lord. Good people do so now. And it is well to do this, if the vow be made with care, and kept with the heart.

3. *Paying vows.*—To pay the vow is to do that which we have promised. Better that we should not vow, than to vow and not pay. Why is this? Because it would be like *mocking God*. He knows every promise, and whether it is kept. Men have often in danger vowed to serve God, and to live in His fear, yet, when the danger has passed, they have forgotten or slighted their vows. This is a great sin. It is well that we promise to love and to serve God. Then let us pray for help that we may keep this vow, and say, as David did, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord."

Revision.—What is it to promise? What is meant by vowing? What is it to pay a vow? Why is it wrong to break a vow?

What vow did Jacob make? What other vow was spoken of? What did David say about his vows? What do we need to enable us to keep our promises? How may we get this help?

June 14.—About Praying.

Rom. viii. 26: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought."

1. *We should all pray.*—This is God's command. We are ever in need of many things for our body and our soul. These we can only get through prayer. How sad would be the state of a little child without the love, and the labour too, of parents and friends to care for him, and to keep him. But we should be all in a far worse and more helpless state without the care of our Heavenly Father. For all that we thus need, we must *pray*. Besides this, we have to worship God in prayer, to praise and to bless Him for His great goodness and mercy to us. We cannot be good, or safe, or happy without much prayer.

2. *We know not what to pray for without God's help.*—Children often ask from their parents what would not be for their good. How is this? Because they *do not know* what is good for themselves, and because they wish for what they *like*, and this is often what would be hurtful. So it is with prayer to God. We have not only to wait for the answer from Him, but also to learn from Him what we should pray for. "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought." What, then, shall we do in this state? Will God teach us this? Yes, by His Word, and by His Holy Spirit, "He giveth wisdom"—for this, as for all else—"to them that ask Him." And all need this teaching, the wisest and the greatest men, as well as little children. Say every day, "Lord, teach me how to pray."

Revision.—Why should all pray? How should we pray? Why do children often ask for what is not good? What does this teach us about prayer? How do we know that God will help us to pray?

June 21.—The Blind Man Cured.

Mark x. 48: "Many charged him that he should hold his peace.

1. *The blind man.*—As Jesus once went out of Jericho with His disciples, there followed a great multitude of people. They went along the high road leading to Jerusalem. Near the gate of the city a poor man sat by the wayside, begging. He was blind, and could not work, and, being poor, his friends had put him there, to get a little money from the passers by; like some poor blind men you may have seen in this country. While sitting under the shadow of the trees by the roadside, he heard the sound of many feet and the hum of many voices, as the crowd drew near. He asked who they were, and when he heard that Jesus was passing by, he began to cry out, and to say, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." How wise this was! As soon as he knew that Jesus was within the sound of his voice, without stopping to ask or to think about it, he at once "cried out" for what he wanted.

2. *The hindrance.*—Some of the people were offended at his cry, and would have stopped him. "Many charged him that he should hold his peace." But he knew better than to do that; and, instead of ceasing, "he cried the more a great deal." Why was he so earnest? Because he felt his great need, and knew this to be his only opportunity. If he let this pass, he might never again be near Jesus. How sad, that even now many strive to hinder others from coming to Jesus. Sometimes by mocking words, sometimes by harsh and cruel ways. Those who suffer from this, may learn from the blind man, who only "cried the more," when hindered by those about him.

3. *Finding mercy.*—Jesus heard the poor man's cry, and "stood still, and commanded him to be called." They told him with kind words, and he rose, "casting away his garments," thinking and caring for nothing but how he might bring himself and his wants to Jesus. Jesus asked what He should do for him? Did He not know, then? Yes, but He loves to hear the prayer of the needy. Are you in need? Let the blind man teach you how to pray. He said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." And Jesus, in a moment, gave him his sight. The light entered the dark eye, and for the first time he saw the earth, and the sky, and the faces of those about him, and full of joy he "followed Jesus in the way."

We all need this power and mercy of Jesus to open the *eyes of our mind*.

Many whose eyes are open have dark hearts: they see not the way of happiness, nor the road to heaven. Has He shown you this great mercy? Then, like the blind man, "follow Jesus," by loving obedience all your life.

REVISION.—Where did this happen? What did the blind man say? How did he overcome the hindrance? What did he want? How did he get it? What does this teach us about Jesus? What lessons for ourselves may we learn from the case of the blind man?

June 28.—Three Days of Darkness.

EXOD. x. 22: "There was a thick darkness in all the land.

1. *Results of sin.*—Our verse tells of another plague sent by God upon the land of Egypt. We have heard of *five* before. Do you remember what they were? It may be that, in his pride and blindness of heart, Pharaoh thought God could not send greater punishments than these. He knew not the power of God, and sinned on, still refusing to let the people go. Then God struck the people, and also their cattle, with a sore disease, boils breaking out upon them "throughout all the land." After that, God sent "thunder, and hail, and fire," which smote through all Egypt; man and beast, and herb and tree. And then a swarm of locusts, so vast, that they covered the earth, and filled the houses, and ate up the fruit of the trees and the herbs of the field which the hail had left. At these most grievous plagues Pharaoh trembled, and it seemed each time that he would yield. But when God in His mercy removed the plague, "he hardened his heart" as before.

2. *The thick darkness.*—A plague was now sent, more wondrous and terrible than any they had yet had. In Egypt the sun shines in glory and in strength, day by day, far more brightly and constantly than here. No fogs or clouds shut out its light, as with us. Pharaoh and his people worshipped the sun as a god. But the Lord showed them that He was greater than their gods; for He caused Moses to stretch his hands towards heaven, and "there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt" for "three days." The light of the sun was shut out; "they saw not one another," nor even "rose any from his place." Throughout these three terrible days of darkness they sat in dread; the work of the field, the pleasures of home, the busy life of the city, were all stopped. Would Pharaoh dare, after this, still to strive against God? While the terror of this great plague was on him, he said to Moses, "Go ye, serve the Lord." But when God allowed the light of the sun to return, Pharaoh's sin grew strong again, and he refused to obey God. We do well to remember that it is as true of a very wicked person as of Pharaoh, that "he shall be holden with the cords of his sins."

REVISION.—Name all the plagues of which our lesson speaks. Why did not Pharaoh obey God? Why was the darkness so dreadful a plague? What did Pharaoh say? What is said of the "cords of sins?" What does this mean?

DAY-SCHOOL AFFAIRS AND WORK.

FRIENDLY HINTS:

THE MOST ABLE TEACHER.

IT is almost impossible to form too high an estimate of the importance which attaches to the teacher's competency for his office. Some teachers, although intelligent and well-educated, lack certain qualities, without which a school cannot be conducted with real efficiency.

To achieve great success, the teacher must be more than a mere enthusiast; for, although without some enthusiasm he cannot be expected to make much headway, it is not sufficient by itself and alone. He must also be a student in every sense of the word, taking pains to be well-informed on all needful subjects, and always far ahead of his most advanced scholars. Now, the enthu-

siast and the student ought to be united in every teacher; for, if he fails to be either one or the other, the good he will accomplish will be comparatively little. The man whose heart is in the work, and who prosecutes his labours with ardent zeal, but with only ordinary ability and moderate attainments, may, and frequently does, make more progress with his scholars than the man of brilliant talents and great learning, but who is not enthusiastic. The reason of this is evident. The mere student makes but an indifferent teacher, because his own pursuits occupy too much of his attention. He is too absorbed in some favourite study to allow his mind to be concentrated upon his duties in the school. He has not that sympathy with scholars, that patience with them, and that desire to see the work prosper which the enthusiast has; and, consequently, his work is dull and unpleasant to him, and yields little result.

Some of our most successful teachers have been men, not so much distinguished for their profound learning, as for the heartiness with which they went about their work. They loved the children, delighted to watch their young minds grasping at new ideas, assisted them in their studies, and were forbearing, unselfish, kind, and sympathizing in their bearing towards them. The most successful tutor the writer has known possessed but a moderate knowledge of the subject which he taught, but he had enthusiasm; he had, and showed, great affection for the students under him; he cheered and animated them by his kind and patient manner, and to this, in a great measure, his success may be traced. We want such teachers,—earnest, intelligent, loving, and patient. We do not need ungovernable zeal, but zeal regulated by prudence, and prudence animated by zeal.

Here are two teachers.

The one is enthusiastic and intelligent; his mind and heart are in the work; he is delighted with the signs of progress which the children exhibit from week to week; he sees with pleasure that some, whose attention all his efforts scarcely arrested at first, begin to drink in knowledge with gladness. He finds that their minds are undergoing great changes; he makes them his study; and so puts the lessons before them, so wins their affections, by his tone and manner, that they are beguiled of the tediousness of their task; and frequently, when least suspecting it, they receive the indelible impression of some important truth or principle, which he wishes to convey to their minds and hearts.

The other, who is, perhaps, of the two, the better scholar, has little zeal in the cause of education. Often, when his body is in the school, his mind is wandering elsewhere. He is impatient, cannot bear with the slowness and dulness of his scholars, and is repeatedly inveighing against them for profiting so little by his instructions. Teaching is to him irksome and uphill work; he is often stern and unforbearing in his treatment of the children; and, as a result, they regard him with fear rather than with love.

The writer knows two teachers who answer, in every respect, to the foregoing description. He is also acquainted with their schools; they contain about the same number of scholars, but the progress made in one is very different to that made in the other. The shortcomings of the inferior school are to be ascribed not to the children, but to their teacher.

T. B.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

Meetings of Circuit Sunday-school Unions.

HULL: WALTHAM-STREET CIRCUIT.—The first annual aggregate meeting of the Methodist Sunday-School Union of this Circuit was held on Tuesday, March 31st, in Waltham-street Chapel. The Rev. W. Williams presided. The Report presented by Mr. Reynard, one of the secretaries, contained a full statistical account of the number of officers, teachers, and scholars, and a statement of the comparative efficiency of the several schools, in relation to teachers and scholars in Society; their regularity and punctuality of attendance, and so forth. The Rev. G. O. Bate moved the adoption of the Report; after which the meeting was addressed by Messrs. Ostler, Christie, Wray, Glew, Johnson, Barron, and Haller, as representatives of schools, and by the Revs. George Walker and D. J. Waller. A collection was made towards defraying the expenses of working the Union.

On Friday, April 24th, (being the evening of the Quarterly Union Prayer-meeting,) a conference of teachers and officers was held in the Beverley-road school-room. After tea, Mr. Reynard read a paper on "Our Senior Scholars." A profitable conversation then followed upon that subject, especially in relation to various suggestions made in the paper as to means which might be tried for retaining the elder scholars in connexion with the schools.

WAKEFIELD.—The first annual meeting of the Wakefield Wesleyan Sunday-school Circuit Union was held at Lofthouse, on Easter Monday afternoon, when about 300 teachers and officers sat down to tea. After tea, the Rev. T. Kent took the chair, and opened the meeting with a very appropriate speech. The Secretary read the Report, which stated that there were 423 teachers, and 2,507 scholars in the various schools; being an increase of 28 teachers, and 192 scholars, during the year. The average attendance of both teachers and scholars, in the morning, as well as in the afternoon, has been greater during the past year, than in the previous one. A paper on "Bible or Select Classes" was read by Mr. Wice, and one on "The Model Teacher," by Mr. King. A very profitable conversation on the management of senior classes was held, in which the Rev. R. Posnett, and Messrs. Wright and Sugden, took part. Addresses were also delivered by the Revs. H. Balls and R. Posnett. The meeting was one of the most interesting held in the Circuit for a long time. A very gracious influence pervaded the entire proceedings, and we are hopeful that the results will be seen in the greater efficiency of our schools. J. S.

HUDDERSFIELD: QUEEN-STREET CIRCUIT.—The ninth annual meeting of the Wesleyan-Methodist Sunday-School Union was held in the Queen-street schools on Tuesday, April 14th, 1868; when friends from all parts of the Circuit were present. After tea, the chair was occupied by the Rev. J. G. Cox, Superintendent Minister, who called on Mr. W. O. Clough, one of the secretaries, to read the Report. It stated the number of schools in the Union as 9; teachers, 336, of whom 214 are members of Society; scholars, 1845, an increase of 219; scholars members of Society, 101, increase 23; scholars upwards of fifteen years old, 537; average attendance 1,100; teachers in preparatory classes, 55; mixed infant-classes, 4, three of which have been started during the year. The Leeds-road school, with 176 scholars, had decided to join the Union. The Quarterly meetings had been tolerably well attended; at one, a practice-lesson had been given to a class of boys, by Mr. Farnish, one of our day-school masters, and was much appreciated. The Report concluded by pointing out the necessity of more godly teaching, as forming a great barrier to the spread of vice, and by urging the teachers to seek earnestly the conversion of the scholars. A number of recommendations and suggestions for the better working of the schools, which had been drawn up by the committee, were read over to the meeting. The Rev. J. Judge moved, and Mr. Harris (one of the Superintendents of the Queen-street school) seconded, the adoption of the Report. The visiters then gave reports of the state of the schools they had visited; these were, generally, satisfactory. The meeting was then thrown open for general conversation, in which several friends took part. The chairman also addressed the audience at some length: he referred, with great pleasure, to his own Sunday-school days; expressed his deep sympathy with the teachers in their noble work, urged them to be regular and punctual in their attendance at school, and thought teachers would be more successful, if they attended every Sunday. The teachers were greatly pleased and encouraged by the meeting. A. J.

Manningtree: Parents' Meeting.

THE committee and teachers of the Wesleyan Sunday and day schools, feeling that such an entire unanimity of purpose as

is desirable did not exist between themselves and the parents of the children, invited the former to a social tea, in the Lecture Hall of the Mechanics' Institute, on Thursday, April 2d. About two hundred cheerfully responded, and listened, with the utmost attention, to an interesting and profitable address by the Rev. W. P. Peck, Superintendent of the Circuit, who dwelt especially on the importance of the age in which we live, in its relation to posterity, and upon the beneficial results of Sunday-schools to the country; and closed by exhorting all present to assist in implanting right principles in the minds of the young. The superintendent of the Sunday-school spoke of the pleasure which he and his co-workers felt in striving to benefit the scholars, and asked the co-operation of their parents, especially their mothers, in order to punctuality. The day-school master gave some practical hints upon the training of children. The Rev. H. P. Wilson delivered an address upon "Home, and its Relationships." Mr. Harvey, sen., spoke of the good results which he had witnessed from Sunday-schools during forty-five years. Mr. Fenton, speaking as one parent in the name of all, thanked the committee and teachers for their persevering kindness to the children and their parents.

J. W. L.

Popular Education in Birmingham.

The annual meeting of the Birmingham Education Society, held under the presidency of Mr. Dixon, produced an immense volume of facts relating to the subject with which the Society is engaged. Through the agency of this body, an investigation has been made into the educational condition of all the working-class children in the town, 52,573 in number. Of these, 7,517 were under three years of age, and consequently too young for school-attendance. Of the remainder, ranging from three to fifteen years of age, 23,052 were boys, and 22,004 girls. Of the boys, 17,006 had been to school in some way, and 5,976 had not; 8,587—a little above one in three—were at school at the time of the inquiry, and 3,902 were at work; leaving 10,563, neither at school nor at work: 7,096 could read and write, 2,934 could read only, and 13,022 could neither read nor write. To anticipate the natural observation that these figures are deceptive, inasmuch as they relate to children many of them infants not more than three years of age, the Report of the Society gives the particulars of every age from three to fifteen. In order to exhibit the most favourable part of the return, we will next extract what refers to those, 3,863 in number, between thirteen and fifteen years of age. As these children have, most of them, already received all the teaching they are ever to obtain, their cases may be considered practically to exhibit the results of the existing "system." Of the number mentioned, 3,211 had been to some kind of school for an average period of $3\frac{3}{4}$ years, and 652, or one in five, had never been to school; 377 were at school at the time of the inquiry; 2,383 were at work; and 1,103 were neither at school nor at work: 1,955 could read and write, 552 could read only, and 1,356 could neither read nor write. The conclusion, therefore, is that, of boys reared in this advanced age, in one of the most enlightened of our towns, only one-half, at the end of the school-age, can read and write; one-third can do neither; two-fifths are running the streets, neither at school nor at work; and one-fifth have never even been in a school. It is needless to pursue the history of the girls, for that merely re-echoes what has been said of the boys. By turning to another part of the Society's Report, we meet with the cause of this miserable state of affairs. Of 300 families, taken indiscriminately from the books of the visiters, the income of families assisted by the Society was, after paying rent, (averaging $5\frac{1}{4}d.$ a head per week,) only $1s.\ 1\frac{1}{4}d.$ per head weekly. In the number, there were 80 families of widows and women deserted by their husbands, and with them the income, clear of rent, was only $10\frac{3}{4}d.$ a head per week. It is clear that the payment of $3d.$ weekly for schooling was out of the power of these poor people, and that their children were condemned by the force of hard circumstances to be brought up in ignorance. The remedy is none the less clearly indicated. The first step towards an improvement must be the provision of free-schools for those who cannot afford to pay for education. Without that, it is simply foolish to expect that the children of the very poor, who constitute a considerable portion of our working population, will ever acquire even such humble accomplishments as the arts of reading and writing. The Education Society aims to supply this deficiency, by paying the school-pence of poor children; and upwards of three thousand, who would be otherwise in the streets, are actually at school through its instrumentality.—*Birmingham Journal.*

The Education Grant.

The vote proposed for public education in Great Britain for the year ending with March, 1869, is £842,554; an increase of £136,689 over the vote for the fiscal year just expired. The calculation, based upon the number of scholars in average attend-

ance in schools inspected in the last school-year in England, with the per centage added for the ordinary increase, gives 985,200 as the estimated average attendance in 1868; but an addition of 45,000 is made for half-timers under the Workshops Act, and of 16,000 for scholars in Congregational and other schools, newly admitted to aid, raising the estimated number of day-scholars to 1,046,200. The rate of grant is estimated to be raised, under the minute of February, 1867, to 9*s.* 10½*d.* per scholar. Hence the education-vote of this Session will make provision for 1,046,200 day-scholars at 9*s.* 10½*d.* in elementary schools fulfilling the article requiring certificated teachers, the amount reaching £516,561, instead of the £427,345 of last Session's vote; and 56,340 evening-scholars, at 6*s.* 6*d.*, requiring £18,310. To this has to be added an estimate for the present year for scholars, under the new system, in schools not fulfilling the article requiring certificated teachers. It is calculated that if, on an annual average, a million scholars be attending aided schools, there remain 500,000 attending unaided schools of the same class, and that 100,000 of them are in schools with an average attendance not exceeding 65, the limit proposed; of the 100,000 a certain number were inspected last year, and, adding to these one half of the remainder as the number likely to be at once brought under inspection by the offer of the 8*s.* grant, the total increase to be provided for in the financial year 1868-9 will be 52,500 day-scholars. The grant for these, taken at 5*s.* 5*d.*, will be £14,218; and for 3,000 more evening-scholars, at 3*s.* 8*d.*, £550. The total of annual grants for scholars in England, therefore, which was £443,345 in the year 1867-8, will be £549,639 for the year 1868-9. The vote of this Session will also provide for ten more inspectors than the vote of last year, making 78; and, for three new assistants, making 23 inspectors' assistants. This is caused by the anticipated increase in the number of schools and children to be visited and examined. Two of the additional ten inspectors represent temporary appointments only; namely, substitutes for two of the senior inspectors withdrawn to serve on the Commission of Inquiry into Education in Ireland. Briefly, the education-vote for Great Britain to be proposed this Session stands thus:—Office in London, £29,482; inspection, £64,103; normal schools, £74,250; building grants, £45,000; annual grants, England and Wales, £549,639; grants to teachers in Scotland, £79,500; unexpired pensions, £580. Total, £842,554.

Prince Alfred and the Schools of Australia.

The Prince Royal has received a hearty welcome to the Australian colonies,—one continued ovation. The weather, however, proved exceedingly wet. But these invaluable rains were sadly needed; so much so, that the churches were about setting apart a day of solemn prayer and fasting to ask rain from heaven, when the Lord prevented us by His goodness, and turned our prayers into thanksgivings.

This 4th day of February, 1868, was the occasion of the presentation of a Bible, in a casket, to the Prince, by the Protestant school-children of Sydney and its environs. The inner domain, where the presentation took place, constitutes the private walking grounds and garden of Government House, and is delightfully situated. It skirts the unrivalled harbour of Sydney, which possesses the very large number of sixty bays, in the deep sheltered waters of which, more than all the navies of the world might ride securely at anchor. The coast-line of this wonderful harbour, extraordinary as is the statement, measures, from head round again to head, no less than four hundred miles. The splendid Botanic Gardens adjoin the inner domain; the well-kept public park stretches beyond; the various heights of the suburbs of Sydney are in view, dotted with their elegant and picturesque white freestone villas; the Blue Mountains, forty miles distant, look scarcely more than four; an optical illusion, which greatly impresses all new-comers from the denser climes of England. These mountains span half the horizon, and bound the vision. Such varied combinations of scenery form a galaxy which descriptive power is less likely to overrate than to underrate.

Lest the weather should still prove wet, a portion of the sloping ground of this inner domain was carefully covered in; but the weather proved one of the most pellucid and admirable of our Australian days. About twelve thousand children, and many of their teachers, marched in, accompanied by bands of music. Five thousand visiters grouped around. The number of clergy who accompanied their schools was very large. His Royal Highness, kindly complying with the wishes of his inviters, and determined that no child should depart without the satisfaction of seeing him, remained standing on the steps of Government House, after the presentation had taken place, whilst the schools marched past him. Although no time was lost, this proceeding occupied just one hour. The Government placed the railway at the service of the suburban schools, free of charge. The Governor

and suite, and a large number of our leading people were present. All classes appeared to enter heartily into the spirit of the scene. As the schools marched out, the Inspector-general of Police, who with his men had rendered good service, called for three cheers for the Prince; which, rising from all quarters, and mingling with the strains of music, floating of banners, and voices of the children singing "God save the Queen," finished off the occasion admirably.

A detailed description of the Bible and casket would prove too lengthy. All that native gold, all that frosted and oxydised silver, all that the curious arts of the cabinetmaker, the goldsmith, and the jeweller could do, was done. Messrs. Hardy and Mr. Jones exerted themselves to the utmost, and no mean utmost it proved. The casket was of myall, (a beautifully scented native wood,) resting on four claws of the emu, (the largest of Australian birds,) with carved edges and mouldings. In the centre of the top was a group of six figures in frosted silver, representing our Saviour blessing little children; the base of the group in silver, chased beautifully, representing native grasses, ferns, and wild flowers. Around, were miniature silver wreaths of the native honeysuckle, the waratah, (native tulip,) fronds of the cabbage-tree palm, native rose, and other vegetable products. At each corner of the casket stood a full-length aboriginal figure amid groups of Australian foliage, all in oxydised silver. The substantial handles were composed of silver, frosted and burnished, with the opossum and black snake in relief, in oxydised silver. As to the jewel of the casket, the blessed Bible, it was in crimson velvet binding, with lining of splendidly illuminated silk, clasps and corners of native gold, in which were devised the waratah, surrounded by feathery ferns and graceful scrolls. The clasps were of solid gold. The inscription in letters of gold.

I have not at hand the paper containing an account of the Victorian presentation at Melbourne. The number of children who attended on that occasion was, at least, equal to our number, and every arrangement passed off excellently

The beautiful island of Tasmania, at Hobart-Town, furnished about five thousand children for the occasion. The Tasmanian papers give most interesting and lengthy details. I send you, in conclusion, the following cutting from the "Hobart-Town Mercury's" account:—"As the Prince approached the children's stand, the hearty cheers were renewed, flags and handkerchiefs waved, and hats were tossed up. The six gallant greys, and the whole procession, came to a halt; the band struck up a preliminary note, the conductor waved his staff, and the children sang heartily. We have not yet heard the 'Ode of Welcome' better sung. It was a great success. As soon as the National Anthem, which followed, had been sung, during the singing of which the people uncovered, a scene ensued, which His Royal Highness seemed to enjoy amazingly, and laughed at most heartily. The children were nearly all provided with bouquets, and, as the carriage moved on, a perfect avalanche of them was hurled at His Royal Highness. Around, over, and under the carriage they fell, in endless profusion. Some of them even struck His Royal Highness, and fell into the carriage. All along the road the shower of bouquets continued, and one or two, well-aimed, actually hit His Royal Highness on the head, and nearly knocked his hat off, and he only saved it by quickly catching it with his hand. These rather demonstrative effusions of young Tasmania were received by His Royal Highness with such thorough goodnature, as won for him, from all, loud and repeated cheers. By the time the carriage reached the gates of Government House, it must have been half filled with flowers. About fifteen thousand persons are considered to have been present besides the children." The Prince is an immense favourite. The Lord grant that "the Rose of Sharon" may bloom blessedly in his young heart.

R. W. VANDERKISTE.

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.—No. I.

DEBORAH.	Judges iv. 4.	ORPAH.	Ruth i. 14, 15.
DORCAS.	Acts ix. 36, 39.	RACHEL.	Genesis xxxi. 34.
ESTHER.	Esther iv. 16; v. 2.	ABIGAIL.	1 Samuel xxv. 32—35.
BERNICE.	Acts xxv. 13, 23.	HANNAH.	1 Samuel i. 13. W.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

61. From 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11, it seems probable that Timothy was with Paul when he was stoned at Lystra.

62. Paul was prevented from going into Asia and Bithynia to preach. (Acts xvi. 6, 7.)

63. Andrew was Peter's brother, and Peter was the son of Jonas. (John i. 40, 42.)

64. Erastus was chamberlain of the city of Corinth. (Rom. xvi. 23.)

65. Andrew was one of John's disciples before he became one of our Lord's Apostles. (John i. 35—40.)

66. Luke was the only Christian friend with Paul when he wrote, "I have finished my course." (2 Tim. iv. 11.) W.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

ELIZABETH MANSFORD.

Elizabeth Mansford was born at Eagle, a pleasant village near Lincoln, on the 24th of October, 1843. From earliest infancy she was taught and trained by her godly parents in the truths and ordinances of religion, and in keeping holy the Sabbath-day; and her life-long reverence for it was shown by her abstinence, during its hours, from reading any book not of a strictly moral or religious tendency; and she was grieved when she knew others indulge in the contrary, and, to her enlightened and tender conscience, sinful practice. From childhood she had the gracious fear of God, evidenced by her thoughtfulness as to her spiritual state and everlasting prospects when asking a friend, "Do you think I should go to heaven, if I were to die? I try to be good. I don't say any naughty words; and I pray three times a day."

At thirteen years of age she became a member of the Methodist Society; a good preparation for leaving home, which occurred about a year later, when she went to a school at Burnley as a pupil-teacher, where she won the love of those with whom she lodged: her amiable, steady, and consistent conduct causing her to be esteemed and treated as a daughter, and the formation of a friendship which was only severed by death.

She entered our Westminster Normal College, as a first-class Queen's Scholar, at the Christmas of 1863; and spent the two following years as a student in the Institution, passing through her course with credit and success. At the end of that period she was appointed to take charge of the new week-day school at Highbury, London, where she laboured until November, 1866, when failing health compelled her to resign: for in the latter part of 1865 there were premonitory symptoms that her strength was giving way. Rest from school-duties, and the Divine blessing on medical treatment, enabled her to resume her duties, till the signs of consumption unmistakably appeared, and she quitted school-life for the rural home of her beloved parents.

Both at college, and in her school, she took great delight in her work; fulfilling all duties with that cheerfulness and scrupulous conscientiousness which were the most prominent features of her character. Her sufferings, during the whole of the three years, were constant, and often great; but she was never fretful, or impatient, and was only disheartened when kept from her duties, (a rare occurrence,) or hindered in the discharge of them. Her earnest spirit not only exacted from her ailing body more labour than it could well bear, but led her to continue her work longer, perhaps, than was prudent; and when she finally resigned, it was found, to the surprise and grief of her friends, that disease had made alarming progress, and that there was but little strength left to resist further attacks. Although her stay at Highbury was thus cut short, she had already, by her tenderness and

patience, endeared herself to her scholars, and gained the affections of friends to whom her memory is fragrant. The parting from them, and from the work on which her heart was set, was a great trial to her; but she bore it with composure, and in her last illness she was cheered by the assurance that her labour had not been in vain.

Her religious experience was not altogether cheering or satisfactory. She entertained very just views of duty, and very humbling views of herself; and had a yearning desire to *be* and to *do* right. But she had not that soul-refreshing view of Jesus, and His Word, which it is believed she enjoyed "when first she saw the Lord." The depression was, perhaps, ascribable more to physical than moral causes; an overtaxed, delicate frame throwing something of its languor over the mind. Hence she seemed as one of little faith, ever ready to droop, to doubt, and almost to despond. This tinged too generally and deeply her young life; causing grief to those who lived with her, loved her, and could not but observe this prevailing bondage. But though previously, there had been more fear than joy in her experience, as the final scene drew on, more than gleams of heavenly light and peace shone into her believing soul. When she felt herself beginning to sink, she found the Saviour benignly nigh, and graciously stretching out His all-helping hand, and sweetly dispelling her fears with His words, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" words of comfort rather than of rebuke: so she found, and was glad. When reminded that disease might prove fatal, she would calmly reply, "Well, if it is so, I need not be discouraged or gloomy; the Lord will be with me, I hope." Her medical attendant was pleasingly impressed with her holy cheerfulness. She was gratefully alive to the kindnesses shown to her, and sympathized so much with the sufferings of others, as almost to seem insensible to her own pains.

As the disease stealthily gained on her frame, she sought the Lord with increasing earnestness, and evidently received the kingdom of God with the simple, unquestioning trust of a little child; and, therefore, exchanged her fears for filial confidence and joy. Some weeks before her death she testified, "I have a meetness for, and a title to, my heavenly home." As death drew nigh, she was not only tranquil, but her happiness increased; exclaiming, "O, how happy I am! I have been with Jesus, and He has repeated His promise that, when I go away from you, He will come and meet me. I feel it to be better and better." On her last, loved, earthly Sabbath she was so weak, that she had to be carried to bed before her usual time; it was her death-bed. During the few harrowing days of life she ofttimes was telling of the goodness of God to her soul. On the Wednesday she was in an ecstasy of praise. Over and over again her language was, "O, how sweet Jesus is! My precious Jesus, O, how I love Thee! I should so like to come to Thee!

> 'If all the world my Jesus knew,
> Then all the world would love Him too.'"

She then shouted with all her might, so as to be heard all over the house,—

> "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;
> And when my voice is lost in death,
> Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
> My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
> While life, and thought, and being last,
> Or immortality endures."

Praying, she said, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen! Next, she bade adieu to her relatives, kissing them, and saying, "I shall soon be gone now." In the little time remaining, she said often, "How sweet and lovely Jesus is!" To a brother away, she sent this message, "Tell him how gladly I can die for Jesus." Being assured, about midnight on the Friday, that the struggle would soon be over, she inquired, "Do you think it will?" And on being answered in the affirmative, said, "O, how pleased I am; it will be sweet to go to Jesus. I do love Him so! Blessed Jesus, let me come now." As the morning drew on, she said, "Jesus

is come for me now. I shall soon go. I am so glad. It is so sweet:" and in a few minutes after, her sanctified and happy spirit winged its flight to its redeeming Lord, and to the bright world of glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life.

"Thou, in thy youthful prime,
Hast leap'd the bounds of time:
Suddenly from earth released,
Lo! we now rejoice for thee;
Taken to an early rest,
Caught into eternity."

R. M. W.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

A King in his Old Age.

When a young lion reaches the age of two years he is able to strangle or pull down a horse or an ox; and so he continues to grow and increase in strength till he reaches his eighth year; and his talons, teeth, and mane are perfect, and he grows no more. For twenty years after he arrives at maturity, his fangs and talons show no signs of decay; but after that he gradually becomes feeble, his teeth fail him, and he grows "cubbish." He is no longer a match for the tremendous buffalo; he is overmatched even by the peaceful ox; so he prowls around the cattle-kraals, and snatches a lamb or a kid just as he did when he set out with his parents nearly thirty years before. A woman or a child at night shares the same fate. His strength and sight now decline more and more, till the mighty lion grows lean and mangy, and crawls about from place to place, eating any offal he can pick up, and despising not even so small an animal as the field-mouse: so he starves and dies, or is fallen on and slaughtered by a few cowardly hyænas; or discovered, unable to move, beneath a tree, and knocked on the head by some wandering hunter. — *South-African Paper.*

"Buy the Light?"

A STREET SCENE IN NAPLES.

The colporteurs, or Bible hawkers, who now go about selling Bibles in Italy, have enlisted some juvenile helpers, who are very zealous in their efforts to promote the sale of the Holy Scriptures. A small tray, or wide basket, such as a boy can carry, is fastened by a strap over their shoulders, and is furnished with copies, and they go through some of the streets, holding up the blessed Book, and crying, "Buy the Light—the true Light!" The precious treasure has been withheld from the people of Italy for many centuries, but they are now buying it gladly. In one year 32,000 copies were sold through the agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society. David says, "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light." "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

A Penitent Soldier.

A young soldier, who was leading a wretchedly dissolute life, endangering body and soul, was entreated by a Christian friend to turn from his evil ways, but in vain. One day his friend gave him a Bible, and, as soon as he got it in his hands, he exclaimed, "I will cut it in pieces before your face;" and, taking his sword, he destroyed the Book. Two years after, he was brought to his death-bed, and then his disobedience and rejection of the Word of God filled him with horror; he sent for his friend, entreated him to read the Bible to him, and pray for him. It pleased God to bless the reading to the good of his soul, and he was heard to say, "O, wondrous goodness! that such a wretch as I, who once cut the Bible in pieces, should yet be permitted to hear it. It has now cut my sins in pieces, and led me to Christ my Saviour."

An Infant's Resolves.

A little girl of six years old was, not long ago, called home to God. About a year before her death she had a small writing-desk given her. After her death, her mother unlocked it, and found the following sentences written on a piece of paper:—

"The minute I wake up in the morning I will thank God.

"I will mind my father and mother always.

"I will try to have my lessons perfect.

"I will try to be kind, and not get cross.

"I want to behave like God's child."

Five very precious rules for a little child to make his or her own.

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

MAY 31.—Afternoon Lesson.

THE SUPREMACY OF GOD.—Psalm lxviii.

For repetition, verses 19, 20.

SUMMARY.—This Psalm is a song of praise to celebrate either the victorious close of one of David's wars, or the removal of the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem, 2 Sam. vi. 12—19. Some remarks in it are obscure, but many are plain and instructive, while others foretell the ascension and gracious gifts of our Saviour Christ.

I. God Supreme in Justice.—V. 1—6. V. 1—3 may be read as a declaration, thus: "God ariseth," or, "shall arise;" "His enemies are," or, "shall be," &c. Compare Num. x. 35. As Moses prayed, so David asserts, and then gives the invitation in v. 4. V. 2. The allusions here are at once simple and forceful. V. 4. *Rideth*,—"through the deserts," as He did before the children of Israel. *Jah*,—contraction of Jehovah, the "I Am" of Moses. V. 5. *Holy habitation*,—heaven itself, Ps. xi. 4. V. 6. *Solitary*,—having none on earth to depend upon. *Families*, (Margin, "houses,")—giving them comfort and security. *With chains*,—as captives often were. *Rebellious*,—who fight against God's purposes and people. *Dry*,—"where no water is;" perhaps the greatest calamity which can befall people in the East.

II. God Supreme in Days of Old.—V. 7—14. V. 7, 8 seem quoted from the song of Deborah, Judges v. 4, 5: both passages allude to the exodus from Egypt, Exod. xii. 51; xiii. 18; xix. 16—20. *Dropped*,—dissolved into thunder, lightning, and mist. *Sinai itself*,—quaked as though it would melt. V. 9. *Didst send*, (Margin, "shake out,")—"a shower of unmerited kindness Thou didst scatter," as manna, quails, water out of the rock, &c. *Whereby Thou didst confirm*,—refresh and strengthen. *Inheritance*,—the people of Israel. V. 10. *Congregation*,—host. *Dwelt*, &c.—"As to Thy food, they dwell amidst it."—*Boothroyd*. V. 11. *Gave the word*,—made "the announcement of a victory possible." *Great*, &c.—"Of the female messengers of victory there were great hosts." Compare Exod. xv. 20, 21; 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. V. 12, 13 contain the words of their song. *Did flee*,—Josh. x. 16. *She*, &c.—"Israel dwelling peacefully after the flight of the kings," and dividing the land among her tribes after the conquest of it. V. 13, 14. See Illustration.

III. God Supreme in Grace.—V. 15—19. *Hill of God*.—Mount Zion. *Bashan*.—A high, craggy mountain in the north-east of Palestine. V. 16. *Why leap ye?*—as though indignant and jealous of Zion. *God desireth*.—Compare Deut. xii. 5, 11, with Ps. lxxxvii. 1, 2; cxxxii. 13, 14. V. 17. See Margin: "to denote an infinite multitude." *As in Sinai*,—where God appeared in such glory and power. V. 18. *Ascended*,—having first descended to dwell with men, Eph. iv. 8—10. *Captivity captive*,—conquered and bound to Thy triumphal chariot those who had led others in triumph. *Received gifts*, (Margin, "in the man,")—as Man to give to men. *Rebellious*,—"who had been so, but were now made captives, even these shared in the gifts of the glorious Conqueror, and were permitted to enjoy all the benefits of His Church." V. 19 is the Psalmist's devout thanksgiving for the wonderful goodness of God, which he both reviews and foretells.

IV. God Supreme in the Majesty of His Goings.—V. 20—28.

(1.) *As a Conqueror*.—V. 20—23. *Issues*,—deliverances. V. 21. *Hairy scalp*,—unshorn head and shaggy hair, showing the ferocity of the disposition. *Trespasses*,—iniquities of heart and life.

V. 22. *I will bring*, &c.—I will repeat My former conquests over the enemies of My people. V. 23. *Dipped*,—Margin, "red." *Tongue*, &c.—1 Kings xxi. 19.

(2.) *As King in Zion.*—V. 24—28. These verses allude to the procession—"Thy goings," marches—at the time the ark was carried up into the sanctuary; and to the strength (v. 28) which God reveals to His people in His temple. V. 27. Compare 1 Sam. ix. 21; Matt. iv. 14—16.

V. God Supreme in Dominion.—V. 29—35. These verses are prophetical of the conquests and reign of Christ. V. 30. See Margin. *Bulls*, &c.,—denote the Egyptian power. *Ethiopia*,—now called Abyssinia, Acts viii. 27. V. 32—35 exhort all the earth to celebrate the Redeemer's triumph and universal dominion.

Reflections.—1. *The justice of God which is a terror to the wicked, is a tower of strength to the good.*—Ps. i. 6; v. 12; xi. 5, 7.

2. "*When other helpers fail, O, Lord, abide with me!*"—Such should be our prayer, for He alone is our hope and help, v. 5, 6.

3. *The memory of God's wondrous works should strengthen our faith in His providence and grace.*—What God hath done for His people He can do again, v. 12, 22, 23.

4. *The hill where God dwells is the most glorious of all hills.*—Ps. xlviii. 1—3. We should seek and long to ascend into it.

5. *All that Christ has received is for us*, v. 18.—And He is more willing to give than to receive.

6. *The supreme strength of God is the confidence of His people; His glory and grace are the subjects of their praise.*

Questions.—What does this Psalm celebrate? How does God scatter His enemies? v. 2. What do you understand by His "riding upon the heavens?" What does "Jah" mean? What does God do to the "solitary?" What to those "bound?" What to "the rebellious?" To what event does v. 7 allude? What is said of Sinai? How did God refresh His people? How were victories celebrated? What is "the hill of God?" Why better than Bashan? What prophecy is there in v. 18? How does God show the majesty of His "goings?" What will be the dominion of Christ? Who should celebrate it?

Illustration.—Israel in rest and glory.

See v. 13, 14. Instead of "Though ye have lien among the pots," &c., read, "When ye rest between the boundaries," &c. "At all events, the term denotes a state of peaceful rest. In this condition the Israelites, to whom the address is directed, are taken figuratively. 'Wings of the doves,' &c.; or they are like doves, whose wings glitter with silver and gold. The allusion is to the play of colours on the wings of the dove in sunshine. . . . Verse 14 points to the bright gleam of prosperity which covered the land on the prosperous termination of the war, in room of the darkness in which it was enveloped during the season of hostile oppression: when the Lord scatters Kings, the light of prosperity illuminates the darkness of the land, just as dark Salmon becomes white when covered with snow."—*Hengstenberg*.

JUNE 7.—Morning Lesson.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.—Psalm xxii.

For repetition, verses 26—28.

Summary.—The heading of the Lesson states the subject of the Psalm; for it speaks chiefly, though, perhaps, not solely, of Christ. The meaning and the reason of its title have caused much difference of opinion. See Margin and Illustration. In reading the Psalm, pay close attention to the marginal renderings, which are too numerous to quote.

I. The Sufferer Forsaken.—V. 1, 2. The Psalm begins with the very words of the Saviour's cry, Matt. xxvii. 46. *Forsaken*,—so desperate is his case, that the sufferer thinks his last hope gone. *My roaring*,—"the loudest cries of a heart laden with sorrow and grief." V. 2. My cries never cease because Thou answerest not.

II. His Cheering Remembrance.—V. 3—5. *Holy*,—so I cannot despair. *Inhabitest*,—"sitting enthroned" in the holy place where praise is offered. In V. 4, 5 expressions of present, unaided, and unexampled distress seem to mingle with expectations of eventual succour and victory, which are based

upon the remembrance of the previous doings of the unchanging God.

III. He is Despised and Persecuted.—V. 6—8, 12—18. *But I*—am nothing in comparison with them: an expression of deepest humility. *A reproach*, &c.—Isai. liii. 3; John i. 10, 11. *Shoot . . shake*, &c., —"expressions of exceeding contempt and disdain." V. 8. *He trusted*, &c.—The same contempt in words: a derisive echo of v. 4, 5. How literally fulfilled! Matt. xxvii. 39, 43. V. 12. *Bulls*,—strong, insolent, ferocious men. *Of Bashan*,—remarkable for its excellent pasture, and its strong, swift beasts. V. 13. *Ravening*, &c.—Hungry, and just ready to pounce on his prey. V. 14, 15 describe one at the point to die through terror, weakness, and despair. V. 16. *Dogs*,—in savage ferocity. The last phrase may be read, "As a lion they are on my hands and feet;" so that I have neither power to fight nor fly. V. 17. *May tell*,—count. *Stare*,—without the slightest touch of pity, nay, with hard-hearted satisfaction, John xix. 37. V. 18. *Garments*,—the word means a large, loose, outward cloak. *Vesture*,—an inner tunic, or vest, worn next the body. The clothes of the crucified were the perquisites of the executioners, John xix. 23, 24.

IV. His Appeals.—V. 9—11, 19—21. V. 9, 10 express the tender care God had taken of the sufferer from the very time of his birth, and which is the ground of confidence in his present appeal. *Not far*, &c.,—i.e., be very nigh, or haste to my help, v. 19. This for *three* reasons: (1) *Trouble is near*, described v. 12—18: (2) "I am helpless," v. 11; Isai. lxiii. 3, 5: (3) "Thou art my strength," v. 19. V. 20, 21 are a very earnest prayer. *Dog* and *lion* are to be explained as in v. 13, 16. *Unicorns*,—probably a species of wild ox. *Hast heard*,—so as to save *me from*, &c.

V. Praise and Prophecy.—V. 22—31. V. 22—25 express thankfulness for deliverance, and a resolve to excite the songs of God's people also. Compare John xx. 17; Rom. viii. 29; xv. 8—11; Heb. v. 7. V. 26—31 foretell the blessings which shall flow from the sufferings of Christ, and His supreme dominion among men, Isai. liii. 11; Luke xxiv. 26; Heb. ii. 9—13.

Reflections.—1. *Consider what this Psalm foretells about the sufferings of Christ:* (1.) The meanness of His condition, and the scorn of men on account of it, v. 6. (2.) Their contempt for His claims, and His confidence in God, v. 7, 8. (3.) Their fierce and bitter persecution of Him, even unto death, v. 12, 13, 16—18. (4.) His extreme prostration, and keen sense of utter desolation, v. 14, 15. These sufferings were endured by Christ; showing that David was inspired by God when he wrote this Psalm. They were borne by Christ for us. With what devout thankfulness should we meditate upon them! Read Hymn 28.

2. *Christ, in His need, has taught us where to look for help and deliverance.*—None but God can save us from all evil; yet how prone we are to look elsewhere!

3. *Every Christian should rejoice in the glorious prospects of Christ's kingdom?* v. 27.

Questions.—Who wrote this Psalm? Who is the subject of it? What does it say about His sufferings? What else? Mention some of them. What did Christ feel most deeply? v. 1. Did God forsake Him altogether? v. 21. For whom did Christ suffer? Ought we not to love Him? What will follow from His sufferings?

Illustration.—"the hind of the morning."

See Margin of the title. "It cannot be denied that the *hind* is a very appropriate emblem of the suffering and persecuted righteous man who meets us in the Psalm. On the one hand, the stag, or the hind and the roe, are frequently employed as emblematical of one persecuted or put to death, Prov. vi. 5; Isai. xiii. 14. And, on the other hand, the hind and the roe are used as emblems of loveliness, Gen. xlix. 21; Prov. v. 19. . . . The reasons already adduced, show that it is, at least, exceedingly probable that the hind may be a figurative expression significant of suffering innocence. And it is put beyond doubt by the fact, that the wicked and the persecutors in this Psalm, to the peculiar physiognomy of which belong emblems drawn from the brute creation, are designated by the terms dogs, lions, bulls, and buffaloes."—*Hengstenberg.*

JUNE 7.—Afternoon Lesson.

"THE SACRIFICES OF GOD."—Mark ix. 30—50.

SUMMARY.—Jesus, on the way to Capernaum, from the Mount of Transfiguration, tells the disciples of His own sacrifice. Arrived there, He teaches them what sacrifices they must learn to make if they would be great in the kingdom of heaven, and partake of its glory.

I. THE ONE SACRIFICE.—V. 30—32. *Thence*,—see v. 2. *Through Galilee*,—as far as Capernaum, v. 33. *Should know*,—whither He went, or the retired way He took to avoid the cities and towns. V. 31. *For*,—He was desirous to prepare the disciples for the surprise and sorrow of His betrayal and crucifixion. *Son of Man is*,—He speaks as though the time were very near. *Delivered*,—in the purpose of God, by the treachery of Judas. *Third day*,—according to the Jewish mode of reckoning. V. 32. *Understood not*,—they could not reconcile His death with their notions about a temporal kingdom. *Afraid*,—to know the whole truth, or fearing rebuke.

II. THINGS TO BE SACRIFICED BY US.—V. 33—50.

(1.) *Jealous Ambition.*—V. 33—37. *Being in the house*,—a place more suitable for calm reasoning than *by the way*, where the disciples had *disputed*,—discussed eagerly, with jealousy of each other. V. 34. *Held their peace*,—ashamed that Jesus should detect them in such an unworthy strife. *Greatest*,—first in dignity and power in the temporal kingdom which they thought He was about to establish. V. 35. *Called*,—with set and solemn purpose. *Shall be*,—ought to be *last* in his own thought and estimation. *Servant*,—as the only sure and safe means of his own promotion. V. 36. *A child*,—the type of unassuming simplicity, Matt. xviii. 1—5; Luke ix. 47. *In His arms*,—denoting the child's humble, trustful, teachable disposition, and His own love for him. V. 37. *One such*,—"either in years or in heart." *That sent Me*,—My Supreme Almighty Father.

(2.) *Exclusive Pride or Bigotry.*—V. 38—42. *Answered*,—on the question of receiving or recognising others than themselves. *One*, &c.,—who he was we are not told, but he must have been an honest and hearty believer in Jesus. *Because*, &c.,—they so magnified this fault as to lose sight of the great work the man did. V. 39. *Lightly speak evil of Me*,—"If he has power to work miracles in My name, that is proof enough of his true reverence for My character." V. 40. *Not against*,—in works. *On our part*,—though he may not seem to be. V. 41. *Give you a cup of water*,—a much smaller act than casting out devils. *Not lose*, &c.—I will acknowledge and bless such a one. V. 42. *Shall offend*,—by any rejection such as you have named. *Little ones*,—in reality, v. 37; or in your estimation, v. 38. *A millstone*, &c.,—"This was one mode of capital punishment practised by the Greeks, Syrians, Romans," &c.

(3.) *Darling Sins.*—V. 43—50. The Saviour passes from giving offence to others, to offending ourselves by indulging some lust of the soul, expressed by the act of the *hand*, the *foot*, or the *eye*. Compare Matt. v. 21—30. V. 44, &c. *Worm*,—remorse of conscience, which shall never cease to sting them. *Fire*,—symbol of the fierce wrath of God. Isai. lxvi. 24; Rev. xiv. 10, 11; xx. 10. V. 49. See Illustration. V. 50. *Good*,—"highly beneficial," either in a literal or figurative sense. *Lost*, &c.,—"become insipid." *Wherewith*, &c.,—once lost, its properties cannot be restored, Matt. v. 13. *Have salt*,—the correcting, purifying grace of the Spirit. *Have*,—and preserve *peace*, not ambitious strife.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Where there is no sacrifice, there is no religion.*—It springs out of sacrifice on the part of God, John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32: all its blessings come to us through the Sacrifice of Christ, Rom. iii. 24—26; Eph. 1, 7; Heb. ix. 22: we can neither embrace religion, nor continue to enjoy it, nor discharge its duties, nor spread its triumphs, *without sacrifice*, Matt. xvi. 24—26; Rom. xiii. 14; Heb. xii. 1, 2; Luke xxi. 12, 13.

2. *Whatever the cost, all sin, both of heart and life, must be given up.*—Secret sins, like pride and prejudice, are as ruinous as open ones.

3. *Sometimes God places His people in circumstances which oblige them to*

sacrifice comfort, pleasure, and other things dear to them.

QUESTIONS.—Whose is the One great sacrifice? Why was it offered? What had the disciples been disputing about? Was this right? How did Jesus reprove them? How did He say we may become the "greatest?" Why did the disciples forbid the man who was working miracles? What did Jesus say? What did He say about "a cup of water?" about giving offence? What is meant by cutting off a hand or foot? What is the worm? the fire? Why is salt good? What does Jesus mean by "Have salt in yourselves?"

Illustration.—"SALTED WITH FIRE."

See v. 49. "For every one shall be salted, by an entire integrity and sincerity, with the fire of that altar on which you devote yourselves, as every sacrifice in the temple shall be salted with salt, the emblem of the sincerity and integrity in which it is offered. . . . In this way the admonitory contrast is brought out and impressed upon us; . . . . by opposing the false disciple, who refuses to cut off his right hand, or foot, or eye; that is, wholly and universally to mortify his corruptions, and is cast into hell, a victim to incensed and eternal justice; and the faithful disciple, he who enters into a 'covenant of salt' with Christ; that is, who engages himself to Him in purity and fidelity, and who is offered upon the altar a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour, in all he thinks, and speaks, and does, 'acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.'"—*R. Watson.*

JUNE 14.—MORNING LESSON.

GOD FOR US.—Romans viii. 26—39.

For repetition, verses 15—17.

SUMMARY.—This chapter presents a striking contrast between the state and prospects of those who walk after the flesh and those who walk after the Spirit; chiefly dwelling on the privileges of the latter. Our Lesson presents the source of all privilege; viz., that "God is for us," and shows the blessed and triumphant result of this.

I. GOD THE SPIRIT FOR US. V. 26, 27. *Likewise*,—even as hope cheers, so the *Spirit* proves Himself the Comforter. *Helpeth*,—bears us up against things which would crush us out of hope and life. *Infirmities*,—weaknesses of hope and patience, resulting from ignorance, especially in prayer. *What*,—particular mercies. *As we ought*,—in the spirit and manner most pleasing to God. *For us*,—in our hearts, knowing our wants better than we ourselves do. *With groanings*,—on our part for redemption, v. 23, in which we have the sustaining and consoling sympathy of the Spirit. *Which cannot*, &c.,—unspeakable or unspoken. *He that*, &c.,—God as the Being we pray to. *Knoweth the mind*,—the meaning and desires of the praying soul, though not spoken. *According to*,—the purpose or design of God.

II. GOD THE FATHER FOR US.—V. 28—31. *We know*—this, though ignorant of what to pray for particularly. *All things*,—whether they seem against us or for us. *Good*,—in furtherance of our sanctification, and so making us meet for heaven, Heb. xii. 10, 11. *The called*,—persons invited to partake Gospel blessings, and showing their acceptance of the "call" in the way named in the previous sentence,—*that love God:* to see how good evidence this is that it has been effectually accepted, refer to v. 7. *His purpose*,—which is stated in verse 29 to be this, that they should be *conformed to the image of His Son;* i.e., in holiness and glory. Compare v. 11—17. Note carefully the order of the words in this verse, NOT, whom He did predestinate He foreknew, but, *whom He did foreknow, He also*, &c. God in His Omniscience foreknows who will accept Gospel offers, and predestinates them to enjoy all the blessings of salvation included in "His purpose;" and these "predestinated" ones He leads through all the successive stages of His plan, "calling," "justifying," "glorifying," v. 30. So that grace enjoyed now becomes a pledge of glory hereafter. How encouraging to our hope! Compare Ephes. i. 11—14.

III. GOD THE SON FOR US—V. 32—34. *How shall He not*, &c.,—having given the greatest proof He could of His loving purpose, He will not withhold anything necessary to its full accomplishment. V. 33. *To the charge*,—

with any hope of success. *Elect*,—see v. 28. *Justifieth*,—approves as righteous, Matt. xxv. 23; Rev. xiv. 12, 13. V. 34. *Christ that died*,—is the Judge. "What other can doom us?" *Who also*,—while the Spirit speaks within us.

IV. God making us "more than Conquerors." — V. 35 — 39. *Shall separate*,— destroy our love to Christ, by over-taxing our patience. *As it is written*, &c.,—The painful reality and pressure of the evils named, the Apostle keenly feels while he makes this bold, triumphant challenge. *I am persuaded*,—the strongest word he could use, expressing the full assurance of faith and hope.

Reflections.—1. *How anxious should we be to obtain the Spirit's help in prayer.*

2. *With what patience and hope should we bear those things which seem adverse to us.*—See Gen. xlii. 36; xlv. 26—28.

3. *The gift of Christ is God's pledge that He will "freely give" us all the grace we need on the way to heaven.*

4. *Why should any true Christian be faint-hearted?*—It is our privilege now to be "more than conquerors" over sin and temptation, and "more than conquerors" at last!

Questions. — What is our weakness in prayer? Where is our hope against it? How does the Spirit make "intercession?" For whom does everything work for good? What does God foreknow? Does He know our character and conduct beforehand? Who are the "called?" How are they "justified?" With whom "glorified?" Who will be our Judge! What is He now doing for us? What triumphant question does the Apostle ask? v. 35. What is his confidence?

Illustration.—"God that justifieth."

See v. 30, 33. Chrysostom strikingly says, "He saith not, 'God who remitteth sins;' but, which is much more, 'God who justifieth.' For, when the vote of the Judge Himself acquits, and of such a Judge, of what weight is the accuser?"

JUNE 14.— Afternoon Lesson.

hail and fire.—Exodus ix. 12—35.

Summary.—Our Lesson treats of the *seventh* plague. It is of a more severe character than any of the former ones; and is, therefore, announced in a very formal and impressive manner. Great destruction is caused to the cattle and growing corn in the fields, and Pharaoh becomes alarmed; but, as in former instances, when the plague is stayed, he refuses to let the people go.

I. The Seventh Summons and Threat.—V. 12—21. V. 12. *The Lord hardened.*—Pharaoh had steeled himself against the appeals and gracious strivings of God *five* times, and now in judgment God withdraws His grace, and leaves this hardened soul to its own depravity. V. 13. *In the morning*, —when Pharaoh was wont to go out to the river, ch. viii. 20. V. 14. *Upon thine heart*,—i.e., to fill it "with terror, or grief, or rage." *That thou mayest know*,—I will afflict thee till thou dost. V. 15. If now I had stretched out My hand to *smite thee* as well as thy cattle, (v. 6,) thou hadst been *cut off*, &c. V. 16. But truly I have "made thee stand," (Margin,) preserved thee alive through the former plagues. *To show*, &c.—By more dreadful plagues than thou hast yet known. *May be declared*, &c.—A purpose which has been in course of fulfilment ever since. *As yet*, &c.—Dost thou still tread upon My people to provoke My vengeance against thyself? V. 18. *To-morrow*,—to give Pharaoh a little space for repentance, and to teach that God could command it when He would. V. 19. *Hail*,—a very rare thing in Egypt. *The foundation*,—as a kingdom or nation, v. 24. *Send*, &c.—A token of mercy in the midst of judgment; an opportunity for Pharaoh to show that he feared God. V. 20, 21 teach that some of the Egyptians were impressed by the former plagues, while others followed the example of their guilty king.

II. The Plague. — V. 22 — 26. *Stretch forth*, &c.,— that Pharaoh might know it came at His bidding. *Toward heaven*,—to signify it came from God, as Pharaoh felt, v. 28. See Margin. *Fire ran along*,—"not a sudden flash of lightning," but *fire mingled*, i.e. "formed into balls," rolling on the ground. *Smote..man*,—this was a new terror, for men had not been killed by any

former plague. *Every*,—very many, as in v. 6; x. 5. V. 26. *Only*, — God spared Israel, that the effect might more deeply impress the king.

III. Pharaoh's Terror and Stubbornness. — V. 27 — 35. *Sinned this time*,—"his first confession, but only from fright." *Entreat*, &c.,—as he had asked before, ch. viii. 8, 28; and promised. V 29. *I will*, &c... *As soon as*, &c.,—for the hail and fire will not hurt me, and at my bidding it will cease. V. 30. *But*,—your request and promise are only the result of terror. V. 31. *Bolled*,—in blossom. V. 32. *Rye*,—a kind of wheat called "spelt." *Not grown up*,—of tender growth, not in ear. *When Pharaoh saw*, &c.—Proof enough that he had spoken through dread, v. 28. *Sinned yet more*,— every refusal made his guilt the greater.

Reflections.—1. *God permits hardness of heart and blindness of mind as the punishment of men who persist in rebellion of will and life.*—We need not wonder at v. 12. See Rom. i. 21—24; 2 Thess. ii. 11. Let us take warning, and not refuse God's appeals.

2. *Things which bring anguish of spirit are more painful than those which inflict agony of body.*—Prov. xviii. 14.

3. *All God's works are intended to establish His universal supremacy among men.*— God could have destroyed Pharaoh sooner, but He desired the fame of His "mighty voices" in Egypt to spread, v. 16.

4. *Beware of the influence of bad example.*—Through the influence of Pharaoh, some of His servants were as bad as himself, v. 21, 34.

5. *Men are frequently terrified when they are far from true repentance.*—Let us seek and pray for the Spirit of deep penitence. 2 Cor. vii. 10.

6. *Visitations from God do not of themselves soften the hard heart of man.*—This is the work of the Holy Spirit of God. John xvi. 7—11.

Questions.—Who hardened Pharaoh's heart this time? Why? How was this seventh plague to affect Pharaoh? Did it frighten him? v. 28. Did it cause him to let the people go? Why not? How long was he forewarned of the plague? What did God in mercy tell him to do? v. 19. What kind of hail was it? What was the fire like? What did it smite? Did the children of Israel suffer? How was the plague stayed? Why were the flax and barley smitten? Why were not the wheat and rye? Why did Moses "spread abroad his hands?"

Illustration.—thunder and hail in Egypt.

See v. 24. "Hail is now extremely rare, but not unknown, in Egypt; and it is interesting [to note] that the narrative seems to imply that it sometimes falls there. Thunder-storms occur; but, though very loud, and accompanied by rain and wind, they rarely do serious injury. We do not remember to have heard, while in Egypt, of a person struck by lightning, nor of any ruin, excepting that of decayed buildings washed down by rain."—*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

JUNE 21.—Morning Lesson.

The plague of locusts.—Exodus x. 1—20.

Summary. — God instructs Moses to threaten Pharaoh with the plague of locusts. Pharaoh's servants begin to plead with him; and he consents that the men may go, but not the wives and little ones. The locusts are sent, but with no better result than attended the previous plagues.

I. Eighth Summons and Threat.—V. 1—6. V. 1. repeats the determination of God to punish Pharaoh with judicial hardness, and His purpose in it, ch. vii. 3—5. V. 2. Speaks of this design in particular relation to the Israelites themselves. *That thou*,—Moses, as the representative of the nation. *Mayest tell.. thy son's son*,—all thy future posterity. *Done*,—for your deliverance from their tyranny. *Ye may know*,—by the perpetual remembrance of My great power and love, to reverence My name, and obey My laws, Ps. xliv. 1; lxxviii. 1—16; cv. 26—38. V. 3. *How long wilt thou refuse*, &c.,—since thou hast acknowledged My justice, ch. ix. 27. *Locusts.*—See Illustration. V. 5, 6 give a fearful description of the numbers, boldness, and ravages of these pests; yet the reality was quite equal to the warning, v. 14, 15; compare Joel ii. 1—11. *The residue*,—what was left by the hail. *Every tree*,—they are said to eat not only the leaves, but even the bark of the trees. *Which neither thy fathers*, &c.—The swarms,

ferocity, and fearful desolation caused, shall exceed anything of the kind endured or known before. *And went out*,—with indignation, not waiting for an answer.

II. Pleading and Parleying.—V. 7—11. *A snare*,—"an occasion of our falling into one calamity after another." *The men*,—the people. *Not yet*,—especially after the terrible havoc of the last plague. *Brought again*, —having been sent for. *But who*,—"who and who;" tell me particularly. In v. 9 Moses demands the release of all the people and all belonging to them. V. 10, 11 express scorn and contempt for Moses, the people, and God; as if Pharaoh had said, "The Lord will no more help you than I am willing to let you go." *Evil*,—is the purpose you seek. *Driven out*,—with some violence, by the officers in attendance.

III. Locusts.—V. 12—15. V. 12, 13. "The marvellous character of the phenomenon was, that when Moses stretched out his hand with the staff over Egypt, Jehovah caused an east wind to blow over the land, which blew a day and a night, and the next morning brought the locusts from Arabia." V. 14, 15. *Over all the land..in all the coasts.* —This plague was more universal than any of the others. *Very grievous*,—by their numbers and greediness, darkening the land, and destroying the produce of it.

IV. Repenting and Sinning again. —V. 16—20. *In haste*,—in another fit of frenzied fear. V. 17. *Forgive*,—He seems to feel the wrong he has done to Moses. *This death*,—cause of it; for how could the Egyptians live, if all food were eaten up. V. 19. *West wind*, —blowing them in the direction whence they came. *Red Sea.*—"That locusts do perish in the sea is attested by many authorities." *Not one*,—so effectual was the sweep, that Pharaoh might know it was of God. V. 20.—See on v. 12 of last Sunday Afternoon's Lesson.

Reflections. — 1. *The memory of national deliverances ought to produce national thankfulness and obedience.*— England has had many of these. Are we thankful for them?

2. *What manifold resources God has to teach man submission!*—How suggestive is the variety of these plagues! What cannot God use to afflict man?

3. *Destruction to the fruits of the earth is death to man*, v. 17.—In one way or other we live on what the earth brings forth. Think any day of what you have been eating, and you will find it is so.

4. *Moses was the fitting Minister of a merciful, longsuffering God.*—He does not chide with Pharaoh, but v. 18.

Questions. — What did God wish the Israelites to tell their children? Why? What plague was now threatened? What were the locusts to do? How were they brought? Where from? What did Pharaoh's servants say to him? Why? Whom did Moses say should go? Did the locusts do what was threatened? What effect had this plague on Pharaoh? How were the locusts sent away? Did the King let the people go?

Illustration.—locusts.

See v. 4, 14, 15. "Never shall I lose the impression produced by the first view of them. I had often passed through clouds of flying locusts, and they always struck my imagination with a sort of vague terror; but these we now confronted were without wings, and about the size of full-grown grasshoppers, which they closely resembled in appearance and behaviour. But their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them. On they came like a living deluge."—*The Land and the Book.*

JUNE 21.—Afternoon Lesson.

suppliants "in the way."—Mark x. 32—52.

For repetition, verses 43—45.

Summary.—On the way to Jerusalem Jesus speaks more fully of His coming sorrows. Notwithstanding, James and John seek to be promoted above the other disciples. Jesus says they shall suffer for Him, but withholds the promise of

advancement. The rest being displeased, Jesus teaches them in what true greatness consists. He heals blind Bartimæus.

I. Sad Instructions.—V. 32—34. See Notes on V. 30—32 of Afternoon Lesson for June 7. *In the way,*—on His last journey. *Amazed,*—at His courage and intrepidity after what He had said. *Afraid,*—apprehending that what He had said would surely come to pass. V. 33. *Unto the chief priests,* &c. —A particular description of the process of His trial, sufferings, and death, Matt. xxvi. 57, 65, 66; xxvii. 2, 26—31, 35. *Gentiles,*—The Romans.

II. Suppliants for Place.—V. 35—40. *Come unto Him,*—with their mother, who spoke for them, Matt. xx. 20, 21. *Whatsoever,* &c.,—let ours be the right of choice, as Thine is the prerogative to grant. V. 37. Let us be first in honour *in Thy glory,*—the temporal kingdom they so confidently expected. V. 38. *Ye know not,*—ye ask in ignorance of what My "glory" is, and surely forget what I have just said, v. 32—34. *The cup,*—of inward grief; *the baptism,*—of outward blood and suffering. V. 39. *We can,*—little dreaming what was meant by it, and only caring now to obtain their request. V. 39 may be viewed as a prophecy; for, see Acts xii. 2; and Rev. i. 9. V. 40. Leave out the words in italics: Christ has the right and power to distribute the dignities of His kingdom, as He had taught them, Matt. xix. 27—29; but now He teaches that in doing so He would respect not persons, but characters, Rom. ii. 6, 7.

III. The Best Way to Dignity and Honour.—V. 41—45. *Much displeased,*—for this question of precedence was the very one they had been disputing about, ch. ix. 34. *Called them,*—to pacify and teach them. Compare the Notes on V. 33—37 of Afternoon Lesson for June 7. V. 42. *Ye know,*—"that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them; and hence you imagine the chief in My kingdom will do as they: but it will be quite otherwise."—*Wesley.* V. 45. *Even the Son of man,*—the glorious Lord of this kingdom, Heb. i. 2, 3, 8. *Ministered unto,*—by obsequious slaves, like worldly despots. *A ransom,*—as the price of man's redemption, 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6, 7; Heb. ii. 9.

IV. A Suppliant for Sight.—V. 46—52. *Bar,*—i.e. son of *Timæus. Son of David,*—so even he had learnt the character and claims of Jesus. V. 48. *He cried the more,*—determined not to be silenced by their cold-hearted rebukes. *Casting away,* &c.,—"through joy and eagerness." V. 51. *What wilt thou?*—as though in allusion to the other suppliants. *Sight,*—a very natural and laudable request. V. 52. *Thy faith,*—which prompted thee to cry, and sustained thee when rebuked. *Immediately,*—so the miracle was manifest to all around Him, v. 46. *Followed,* in proof of his thankfulness.

Reflections.—1. *Eagerness in asking is no proof in itself that what we ask is right.*—James and John were as eager suppliants as Bartimæus, but not as safe in what they sought. Sometimes people are most anxious for what is most unsuitable for them.

2. *Our own desires are not to be the law of God's dealings with us.*—We ask in ignorance, God grants in knowledge. We should ask as the Saviour did, Matt. xxvi. 39.

3. *God may call us to suffer, where we hoped to reign.*—So it was with these two disciples. We little know what God has in store for us.

4. "*Before honour is humility.*"—Jesus Himself served and suffered before He reigned, and John xiii. 15, 16; Matt. x. 23—25; Hymn 322.

5. *Urgent need will not submit to be baffled by indifferent people.*—It was a small thing to the multitude whether this man's suit was successful or no; but it was as a question of life or death to him.

6. *We should use wisely the blessings God bestows on us.*—The first use the healed man made of his eyesight was to see the way Jesus went, that he might follow Him.

Questions.—Why were the disciples "amazed?" Why "afraid?" Who were to condemn Christ? Who to kill Him? What did James and John want? What "glory" did they mean? What is meant by the "cup?" the "baptism?" How were the Saviour's words fulfilled in James? in John? Why were the other disciples "displeased?" What did Jesus say about the Gentiles? Did He say it was to be so with the disciples? What then? What is the example He has set? What was the name of the blind man? Where was he? What doing? What did he beg of Jesus? What did the people say? Did he cease? What did Jesus when He cured him? What did the blind man do?

Illustrations.—I. JERICHO.

See v. 46. "This was a large town, about eight miles west of the Jordan, and about nineteen miles north-east from Jerusalem. Near to this city the Israelites crossed the Jordan, when they entered into the land of Canaan, Josh. iii. 16. It was the first city taken by Joshua, who destroyed it to the foundation, and pronounced a curse on him who should rebuild it, Josh. vi. 20, 21, 26."—*Barnes.*

II. AN INFANT'S THOUGHT, THANKSGIVING, AND PRAYER.

"God ought to give him some eyes," said a dear little boy less than three years old, as I told him a sad story of a poor blind boy who had never seen the blue sky, the pretty birds and flowers, the beautiful stars, or the dear faces of his Papa and Mamma. His heart was touched, and tears stood in his own bright eyes as he asked, "Why didn't God let him see?" Carefully and soothingly as I could, I explained to the little one, that God knew best, and for some good reason, which we could not understand, had made some poor children blind. He seemed satisfied; and when I asked him if he did not love the good God who had given him eyes to see so many beautiful things, he replied, in his sweet, lisping way, "I *do* love God, and I want to tell Him, thank you, now;" and, slipping from my arms, he knelt on the carpet, and whispered in low, soft tones, "O God in heaven, I thank You for making me see. Please give the poor blind boy some eyes too, for Christ's sake. Amen." In a moment he climbed to my lap again, with so sweet and happy a look on his face, that I could not but believe the gratitude expressed in that simple prayer was sincere and heartfelt as it was beautiful.

JUNE 28.—Morning Lesson.

FREE GRACE. — Romans ix. 1 — 18.

SUMMARY.—St. Paul is deeply grieved on account of the unbelief of his countrymen, especially considering their privileges. He distinguishes between the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham; and shows how the preference for Jacob was altogether an act of God's gracious choice, indicated before the children were born; and from this he teaches the free grace of God towards men generally.

I. ST. PAUL'S PATRIOTISM.—V. 1—5. (1.) *Its grief.*—V. 1—3. *In Christ,*—I appeal to Him as the Searcher of hearts. *In the Holy Ghost,*—instructed, quickened, guided in its testimony by Him. This solemn declaration is made in the most solemn manner possible. V. 2. *Great heaviness,* &c.,—deep grief, and unceasing distress of mind. V. 3. *I could wish,*—if allowed by God, and likely to be available for their conversion to Christ. *Accursed,*—anathema: devoted to destruction, 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Exod. xxxii. 31, 32. *The flesh,*—by natural descent, Phil. iii. 5.

(2.) *Its glory,* v. 4, 5. — *Who,*—are distinguished by these honours: *Israelites,*—sons of Jacob, whose name was changed, Gen. xxxii. 28; *the adoption,*—as a nation, to be the people of God, Exod. iv. 22, 23; Hosea xi. 1; *the glory,*—of the Divine Presence, the symbol of which rested over the ark, Exod. xiii. 21, 22; xxv. 21, 22; Ps. lxxx. 1; *the covenants,* (Margin, "testaments,")—with Abraham, Gal. iii. 16, 17; with Moses, Exod. xxiv. 8. *Giving of the law,*—Exod. xx.; *the service,*—of the temple, a matter of special boasting with them; *promises,*—particularly of the Messiah. V. 5. *The fathers,*—whose piety and faith in the promises are a rich national heirloom. *Of whom*—as to His human nature—*Christ came,*—the most distinguished honour they had, or could have. *Over all,*—the Lord of angels and of men. *Blessed,* &c.,—words generally added by Jewish writers, after the name of God, as an expression of reverence. By their use here, St. Paul shows his reverent faith in the Divinity of Christ.

II. NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL CHILDREN.—V. 6—8. *Not as though,*—this is not to say the *Word,* &c., failed of its purpose. *Not all Israel,*—spiritually. *Of Israel,*—naturally. V. 7. *Neither,*—is the contrary true. V. 8. *But,* &c.,—Gen. xxi. 12. *Of the promise,*—who believe as Abraham did, Rom. iv. 12, 13.

III. ELECTION OF JACOB.—V. 9—13. V. 11. As they were *not yet born* it was impossible for Jacob to have done anything to merit *election,* or for Esau to forfeit it; yet then (v. 12) *it was said,* &c.,—Gen. xxv. 23. *Jacob,*—i.e., his posterity. *Esau,*—his posterity. *Loved..hated,* — words used comparatively, to teach that the descendants of

Jacob, rather than Esau's, were chosen to be God's peculiar people, Mal. i. 2, 3.

IV. The Sovereignty of Divine Grace.—V. 14—18. *What*,—are we to conclude? *Unrighteousness*,—injustice. V. 15. *To Moses*,—Exod. xxxiii. 19. *On whom I will*,—"on those only who submit to My terms." V. 16. *So then*,—I do not bless according to man's notions, or determinations, to be preferred before his fellows. V. 17, 18, See Illustration of Morning Lesson for April 19, and Notes on V. 12 of Afternoon Lesson for June 14.

Reflections.—1. *Conscience is a safe witness only when it is taught and guided by the Holy Ghost.*

2. *Joy that we ourselves are saved, and grief that others are not, may be felt at the same time.*—"Continual sorrow" does not mean that the Apostle was always so crushed under the weight of it, that he had no hope for himself, no heart to labour for others.

3. *Choice privileges and rich piety do not always go together, though they should*, v. 1—5.

4. *Soul-saving religion does not come to us because our parents are godly; but by the gift of the Holy Ghost and faith.*—We should pray for the Spirit.

5. *God's grace to man is supremely free, both in providence and salvation.*—In the former He favours "whom He will," and in the latter He teaches the only right way. John iii. 26; Acts iv. 12.

Questions.—How did the Apostle speak in v. 1? What did he feel? What could he have wished? Why? What were the privileges of the Jews? Whom did he say Christ was? Who are the true Israel of God? When did God choose Jacob? What was his mother's name? What did God say to her? What do the words "loved" and "hated" mean here? Whom will God save? What is said about Pharaoh? Have you learnt anything about him lately?

Illustration.—"not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth."

See v. 16. "For Abraham judged that the blessing ought, and he willed, desired, that it might be given to Ishmael; and Isaac also willed, designed, it for his firstborn Esau; and Esau, wishing and hoping that it might be his, readily went, ran a hunting for venison, that he might have the blessing regularly conveyed to him; but they were all disappointed,—Abraham and Isaac who willed, and Esau who ran."—*A. Clarke.*

JUNE 28.—Afternoon Lesson.

darkness, and "one plague more."—Exodus x. 21—29; xi.

For repetition, chapter x. 24—26.

Summary.—After the plague of darkness Pharaoh consents that all the people should go, but not the flocks and herds. Moses demands these, and the King is again obstinate. God instructs Moses to teach the people how to prepare for their departure; and also concerning the last dreadful plague.

I. Darkness and Delay.—Ch. x. 21—29. *Stretch out*, &c.—See note on V. 22 of Afternoon Lesson for June 14. This plague was sent without any forewarning at all. *May be felt*,—being so *thick* (v. 22) as to seem palpable to the hand, and painfully to affect the eyeballs as though some heavy weight pressed upon them. V. 22. *Three days.*—What a long time for such darkness to prevail! How terrifying; and Josephus says "their breathing was hindered by the thickness of the air." *Saw not . . neither rose*, &c.,—were quite bereft of the solace which the sight of friends gives in sorrow, powerless to escape, and some think, from Ps. lxxviii. 49, affrighted with apparitions of evil spirits. *But all . . Israel*, &c.—not kindled artificially by themselves, but given to them by God as a token of His favour. V. 24. *Only let your flocks*, &c.—This was a step in advance of v. 11, but even now he does not yield fully. V. 25. *Thou must give*,—the cattle, or how can we live? how can we offer *sacrifices*, &c.? V. 26. *Not an hoof*,—a proverbial saying, to denote not a single animal, not a solitary thing. *We know not.*—God has not yet given us instructions about the sacrifices. V. 28. An expression of frantic rage and desperation. V. 29. *Spoken well*,—said the truth in thy folly, and to thy grief, Heb. xi. 27.

II. Message to the Israelites.—

Ch. xi. 1—3. *One plague*,—the slaying of the firstborn, ch. xii. 12. *Thrust you out*,—be in haste to get rid of you through terror, ch. xii. 31, 33, 39. *Borrow*,—request, recover. See Illustration of Morning Lesson for Feb. 2. V. 3. *Favour*,—a disposition to give them anything to be rid of them, blended with a kind of reverence for Moses: for *the man*, &c.—His miracles, no doubt, had made a deep impression on the people.

III. "ONE PLAGUE MORE" THREATENED.—V. 4—10. *Moses said*,—in continuation of his words, ch. x. 29. *Will I go out*,—"this last blow was to be carried out by Jehovah Himself." V. 5. *The firstborn*,—so dear to all parents. *Behind the mill*, — "female servants were employed in grinding corn with a handmill." V. 6. *A great cry*.—See ch. xii. 29, 30. V. 7. *Not a dog*, &c.,—a proverb, meaning that the Israelites should lose nothing, suffer nothing, but go out in peace and safety, Josh. x. 21. V. 8. Compare ch. xii. 31—33. *In a great anger*, (Margin, "heat of anger,")—because of what Pharaoh said, ch. x. 28; and to signify the wrath of God against him. V. 9. *The Lord said*,—As Jehovah had said, ch. iv. 21; vii. 3, 4. These verses are a declaration that what God foretold had actually taken place.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *When men persist in impenitence and guilt, they may fear punishment without warning.* Prov. xxix. 1.

2. *The darkness in Egypt symbolized the blindness of mind which cursed the Egyptians.*

3. *It is a proof of God's grace when His people are preserved from evils which fall upon others.*—The darkness was a fitting symbol of God's wrath against Egypt; the light in Goshen a sure token of His gracious purpose concerning Israel.

4. *It is often hard for man to give up all that God demands.*—See ch. x. 24; Matt. xix. 21, 22.

5. *Men, in the desperation of pride, often speak words the truth of which is afterwards fulfilled to their own dismay.*—See ch. x. 28, 29; xi. 8; xii. 31—33.

6. *Though God is slow to wrath, yet He is terrible in judgment.*—What a proof of this was the death of the firstborn.

QUESTIONS.—What plague was now sent? What kind of "darkness" was it? How long did it last? What was the effect of it upon the people? Was it dark to the Israelites? What did Pharaoh wish to keep? What did Moses say? How did Pharaoh threaten Moses when he sent him away? What message had been given to the Israelites? What plague was about to be sent? Who was to send it? Whose firstborn was to die? What was to be the result of it? Why was Moses angry?

Illustration.—THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS.

See ch. x. 21. "The plague may have been an extremely severe sandstorm, miraculous in its violence and its duration; for the length of three days does not make it natural, since the severe storms are always very brief. Perhaps the three days was the limit, as about the longest period that the people could exist without leaving their houses."—*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

"We remained two months at Khartoum. During this time we were subjected to intense heat and constant dust-storms, attended with a general plague of boils. Verily the plagues of Egypt remain to this day in the Youdan. On the 20th of June we had the most extraordinary dust-storm that had ever been seen by the inhabitants. I was sitting in the courtyard of my agent's house, at about half-past four p.m.: there was no wind, and the sun was as bright as usual in this cloudless sky, when suddenly a gloom was cast over all,—a dull yellow glare pervaded the atmosphere. Knowing that this effect portended a dust-storm, and that the present calm would be followed by a hurricane of wind, I rose to go home, intending to secure the shutters. Hardly had I risen, when I saw, approaching from the S.W., apparently, a solid range of immense brown mountains, high in air. So rapid was the passage of this extraordinary phenomenon, that in a few minutes we were in actual pitchy darkness. At first there was no wind, and the peculiar calm gave an oppressive character to the event. We were in 'a darkness that might be felt.' Suddenly the wind arrived, but not with the violence that I had expected. There were two other persons with me, Michael Latfalla, my agent, and Monsieur Lambrosio. So intense was the darkness, that we tried to distinguish our hands placed before our eyes;—not even an outline could be seen. This lasted for upwards of twenty minutes; it then rapidly passed away, and the sun shone as before; but we had *felt* the darkness that Moses had inflicted upon the Egyptians. — *Sir S. Baker's "Albert Nyanza."*

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THE
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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

ALL Sunday-school teachers may be congratulated on the advantage accruing to them in their work from the spread and success of day-school education. In most districts of the country it is now no longer so necessary as it used to be, that they should do the work of elementary schools, in teaching children to read. A very large number of those whose age entitles them to a place in the Sunday-school can read in a way sufficient for most purposes of life. There is thus secured, at the outset, in the learner who comes to the teacher's hand, a preparation for the acquirement of knowledge which formerly required much time and labour to impart; and those who desire to do their best for the advantage of children are at liberty to pursue the proper object of Sabbath-school instruction,—which is, to impart *religious knowledge*, and to bring children under *religious influence*.

In remarking on the subject named at the head of this paper, our first point is, that the knowledge which it is the great end of the Sunday-school to afford, is to be sought in the sacred Scriptures, and by means which ensure an acquaintance with what the Scriptures teach. Religious knowledge is acquaintance with the being and character of God;—with the works and ways of God; with His claims as made known in His laws; — with the true nature, character, and destiny of man, especially with his fall and the need of a merciful provision for his recovery;—with Christ, the appointed Redeemer, and the method and conditions of the redemption that is by Him;—with the realities of the invisible and eternal world, the coming of the great day of account, and its everlasting issues, whether in heaven or hell: and, connected with all this, is the knowledge of present duty,—whether to God or to ourselves, to the Church or to society at large;—and of present privilege in the actual and personal enjoyment of religion. Now, the Bible is God's own Book, making known the truth with regard to these all-important subjects; truth which is discovered through no other medium, and is communicated in it as no other book can communicate it. It is the source and instrument of power in all our dealings with the conscience: all the most effective influences of

the pulpit are those which are supported by its facts and utterances; and we constantly feel that, in religious matters, there is nothing certain but what it either directly teaches or implies. In this all will agree, just as they will as to the primary object of the Sunday-school; and it is here laid down, not as though it were questionable with any, but because our felt agreement on this point is a stimulus and encouragement.

Our second point is, that if the Bible be the one source of religious knowledge, the great end of instruction—religious influence—will be secured in proportion as the teacher's ability to impart what it contains is complete. Such a remark might be made of any book which professed to teach authoritatively; but it is the more important to observe it in this case, because of the way in which truth is communicated in the Bible. It is not presented as a system of theology, but, as we may say, in a living form; and it appears as given, just as the necessities of men, or the working out of the Divine plans, called for it. It is communicated in history, in poetry, in prophecy; in promises or threatenings, in invitations, or injunctions. Some of its great truths, such as the Being of God and the existence of the evil one, are implied rather than declared; and brought out in action rather than laid down as doctrine. Though it was written in detached portions, it is a whole; nothing necessary is wanting, nothing can be supplied with advantage, or without harm: nothing is to be added to it, nothing taken from it. The separate doctrines are blended so consistently, that there is no contradiction; and are so interwoven with facts and incidents, that they live, as it were; and it is evident that they are designed to influence and govern us. How evidently important, then, it is, that all who undertake to give religious instruction should secure as complete a knowledge of Divine truth as possible, and aim to declare the whole counsel of God.

Our third point, however, is that our teaching should be systematic. We feel that it must be so in order to be complete; and hence the value of catechetical instruction. We seize the opportunity of adverting to this topic. It is a method of instruction, the antiquity of which seems to assert its value. It has been constantly insisted on, by those who have guided and controlled the action of our own Sunday-schools, as all-important; and it commends itself to the judgment when it is advocated and enjoined; yet, somehow, it is often practically set aside. It is instructive to observe the highest recommendation of its principle in a marginal reading of the text which is most frequently quoted as enjoining religious education,

namely,—"Train up" (or *catechise*) "a child in the way he should go." By its means we communicate to children what ourselves or others have found in God's Book, or learned from it. It fastens attention on a truth, and in some sort compels the reception of it. It puts into form what otherwise might be, as regards its influence, only like a shadow. In good catechising, you give forth the clear and unmistakable sound, and receive back the echo from the learner, with the assurance that the sound has not been unheeded or mistaken. It promotes accuracy; and through the helps that are afforded in books of this character, it secures completeness: a result of the greatest value, because, though the Bible itself is not in a systematic form, it contains a system which is perfect. None of its essential truths should be lost sight of, or kept in the background.

It is with pleasure that we call attention to the facilities for such instruction furnished in the "New Lesson-Books" now issuing from the Wesleyan Conference Office; the one containing a complete series of lessons in "Doctrine," and the other a Lesson-Book in "Bible History." In referring to them in the literary notices of our May number, we remarked upon the importance of good tools to the workman; and in our description recommended them as answering to that character. These books appear to supply a want which has long been felt; and, if used aright, will greatly serve one important end, that of making catechetical instruction more effective and general. They are arranged, as the Introduction informs us, on the basis of the Second Catechism, and are not designed to supersede it, but for use in connexion with it. Speaking more particularly now of the doctrinal part, we may observe that it contains fifty-two lessons, one page being devoted to a subject; and the whole range of doctrinal truth as contained in the Catechism is embraced, so far as the prescribed limits would allow. By the style in which it is arranged and executed, a cheerful-looking and attractive page meets the eye, and invites attention. The subject of the lesson stands at the head in bold type, and immediately next to this is given the section of the Catechism in which it is found, and the numbers of the questions and answers which contain it. Then five short passages of Scripture, in large type, and—as far as possible—in monosyllabic words, present the subject in a manner specially suitable for younger children, and suggestive to the teacher. These are followed by a longer passage, drawn, for the most part, from the historical and narrative portions of Scripture, which forms an illustration of the subject; and this, again, by a verse of a hymn generally taken from the Sunday-School Hymn-

Book, and which also refers to the topic of the lesson. Interest is thus gained by variety, and an additional source of impressiveness is secured. A moment's inspection of a lesson will show that the book is not calculated to supersede personal labour on the part of the teacher. This would not be desirable if it were practicable. It is better to direct and stimulate endeavour than to supplant it; and one great point is gained if only attention can be fixed on a definite subject. Many who desire to give lessons, or deliver addresses, will find one of their greatest difficulties thus removed. They can proceed to work with a direct aim, and without hesitation. But no facilities, however great, will make amends for the absence of that interest in a lesson which is gained by a personal study of it. We have already seen a copy of the book, interleaved with ruled paper, on which a teacher might make notes, and enter references in the way of preparation for each Sunday's lesson; notes and references which might accumulate from year to year. The historical part is dealt with on the same plan. The leading points in "Bible History," as contained in "The Appendix," are exhibited in fifty-two lessons. On each page the subject is named, and the reference to the Catechism is given; the short passages state the subject, the longer one illustrates it; while the verse of the hymn is more or less didactic, (as it should be,) enjoining some point of duty, or declaring the judgment and will of God. On this part, which, in the main, will speak for itself, we would only call attention to one point; that it is remarkable how frequent and striking are the references in Scripture to the facts of its histories, and how abundant short passages are which relate to those facts. The Bible, in this way as well as others, is its own interpreter.

With regard to the general use of these helps, we may further observe, that a plan of simultaneous instruction may be greatly promoted by their employment. The elder scholars and Bible-classes might, if such a plan were pursued, devote their attention to the chapter of the Bible in which the illustrative passage is found, as well as to other passages bearing on the subject; and when the whole school is collected for an address, the person who undertakes that task, if he founded his remarks upon the lesson, would find his youthful audience already interested and prepared. We know of one school in which this has been done, and where the system is found to work well. We would, however, lay down no universal plan to be followed irrespective of circumstances, or at once to displace existing methods; but we would urge that

the principles on which these lessons are prepared are of the greatest value; namely, to ensure a systematic and complete acquaintance with Scripture truth, and to secure interest by facts and scenes drawn from the Bible itself. This latter object will be secured if the teacher, having made himself familiar with them, shall be able to picture to the listeners the scenes and circumstances in the midst of which the truth appears in the Scriptures; as, for instance, in the first lesson, those in which David uttered his signal ascription of praise to God; or, in the second, those amid which God revealed Himself to Moses, and declared Himself the merciful and faithful Friend of His people. By such a method, what freshness will be given to the subject, and what variety and power will be obtained!

It only remains for us to express our desire that the true work of the Sabbath-school will be pursued with still greater effectiveness, and with a more definite aim. If such instruction is continually imparted as we have been advocating, much will have been done towards the attainment of a standard of Sunday-school usefulness, such as all will feel to be desirable—instruction which will *furnish the creed, form the character*, and *habitually influence the conduct*, of those committed to our charge. This will be an instrument of conversion to God, and tell with blessed effect on the Church and on the nation.

SELECT OR BIBLE CLASSES.

The questions have been repeatedly asked, and with a frequency and earnestness which show their momentous import: "How shall we retain our elder scholars? What means shall we employ to continue them amongst us, and lead them into connexion with the Church?" To this we reply, let the elder scholars of our Sunday-schools be gathered together in classes formed for their special benefit; and, at the same time, let endeavours be kept up to seek and to bring back into them those who formerly were scholars. In this way, we may hope so to help to supply the "missing link," that the Sunday-school shall fulfil its intention, and become what its numerous and sanguine workers desire it to be, "the porch leading to fellowship with the Church;" a means by which its ranks shall be constantly recruited with intelligent and Bible-loving disciples.

For the sake of perspicuity, let us take up the several points of the subject in order: thus,—

I. *Of whom is the select class to be composed?*—Of the elder scholars, who are beginning to think themselves too big and too old too remain at school. To these, the select class—by its separation from the rest of the school, the character of its teacher, and its bringing together those of the same age—will become a great inducement to continue in the school. Every effort should also be

made, as we have said, by special invitation, to bring back into this class those who have left the school. When thus constituted, the select class is one to which young persons, coming as strangers into our congregations, may be invited and welcomed, and may thus be made to feel that they are not forgotten; ties which, otherwise, would have been entirely broken, may in this way become strong to bind them to the Church of their fathers, and the results of early training in other schools may be fructified. It is impossible to fix an invariable rule as to the age requisite for admission to the "select class." In our large schools, it appears very desirable to have two such classes,—one to comprise scholars from fourteen to seventeen years of age, and the other for those of seventeen years and upwards. The object of the class is to cultivate the thoughtful and earnest study of the Bible; to call forth and assist reason and reflection; and, above all, to bring about and guide early religious decision. This can be best accomplished by bringing together those who, from similarity in age, are likely to have an identity of feeling and purpose.

II. Having noticed the class, the next point is, *the place in which to hold it.*—It is imperative that this should be a separate room. In all intended school erections and alterations this ought to be carefully provided for. The class should form part of the school, be one with it in its most intimate sense; but it will fail to accomplish its purpose, unless it be held in a room separate from that in which other scholars are taught. If existing school-premises do not admit of this, provision for such an arrangement should be made as soon as possible; for no Sabbath-school is what it ought to be without select classes.

III. The next point is one of vital importance, namely, *the teacher.*—He should be the most competent person the school can command. The first qualification for success is an intensely ardent desire for the salvation of the members of the class. If they are made to feel, by the conduct and method of their teacher, that the consecration of the heart to God is the one thing above all others to be desired, he may hope soon to be cheered by witnessing his scholars give their hearts to God. The select-class teacher must be well acquainted with Scripture doctrines, especially those taught amongst ourselves, and should likewise possess extensive and accurate knowledge of Scripture history and biography; the manners and customs of the Jews, and other Eastern nations; as well as a moderate critical knowledge of those prominent points of doctrine, as to which there exist differences in opinion at the present day. When thus equipped, the teacher will be able to answer inquiries, and correct errors; and so to assist the members of the class that they will not only love the Bible, but appreciate its beauties, admire its marvellous diversity of illustration, and gain a correct knowledge of its glorious doctrines, and its saving truths.

IV. Lastly, *the method of conducting the select class.*—We have before remarked that it must be part of the school, in its most intimate relation; and, therefore, all its members and its teacher should be an example to the school for punctuality and regularity of attendance. To be present at the opening of the school, to take part in the devotional exercises, to give a character to its successful commencement, will be ample recompense for any little effort or self-denial the teacher or scholars may have to make. The devotional exercises of the school being over, the select classes should retire to their rooms. Here a verse or two may be sung, and a short prayer offered,

which may be more direct and special in its nature than one adapted for the entire school can be. Sometimes, instead of the teacher, one of the pupils may be asked to conduct the opening service. The chief element in the successful working of the class is to make those who comprise it feel that they are interested in its welfare; that it is *theirs*. The more this can be accomplished, the greater will be its success.

A subject chosen beforehand will give them an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with it. A series of subjects, written or printed on a card, is not without its advantages. The portion of Scripture so selected, or otherwise, may be read, verse by verse, in turn; if it be short, or the class be large, it may be read twice. This being finished, each verse is taken up in order. Any explanation of its terms, any allusion to eastern habits or to prophetic writings, or to any specific doctrine must, if possible, be drawn from the class by its teacher. In this will be its chief interest. If we can so arrest the attention and call forth the thinking faculty, as to prompt a careful perusal and examination of the Book of books, a comparison of its different parts, an intimate knowledge of its wondrous history and biography; and, above all, if we can secure the sanctified application of that Word whose "entrance giveth light," we shall supply the faith of our young people with one of the strongest bulwarks it can have; and, with the blessing of the Spirit of God, we shall lead them, one by one, to yield their hearts to Him, and say, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel." A map of Palestine would greatly aid in understanding Bible history; so also a map of St. Paul's travels would assist the study of the Acts of the Apostles, and enable the class to see the distance from place to place. One of our Ministers, when visiting a day-school, a few weeks ago, asked if any of the scholars could give him a drawing of the tabernacle? Not one of them being able to do this, he drew a plan for them on the black-board, showing the size and relation of its various parts, with a description of their uses, and almost every child can now draw a similar plan. A black-board, for occasional use, or better still, diagrams drawn by the teacher on a card, would awaken interest, and permanently impress on the mind many important truths in connexion with Old-Testament history. The teacher should not forget how greatly he multiplies his power by this use of the black-board, or diagrams; he appeals to the eye as well as to the ear, and very often the eye retains what the ear loses.

Frequent opportunities will present themselves for the teacher to press earnestly upon the class that great aim of all our labours, the consecration of the heart to Christ. If this be done perseveringly, faithfully, prudently, and prayerfully, many will yield, and will be "the crown" of the teacher's "rejoicing" at the great day. The class should also be encouraged to write brief essays on Scripture doctrines, or sketches of Scripture characters, and to point out the lessons their lives may teach. These may be read as part of a lesson; by this means, mutual emulation and interest will be awakened, and the latent powers of the class will be brought out.

Occasionally, the afternoon may be profitably occupied by an exhortation from the teacher, and in prayer together for the salvation of the members of the class. Let it always close with singing and prayer, or share in the concluding exercises of the school. The writer would be disposed more firmly to insist on all being present with the school at its commencement, than to refuse to allow the dismissal of the class by the teacher without returning to the school.

If teachers acquire the respect and

esteem of those committed to their care, they will soon become their confidential friends and advisers in their difficulties and perplexities. The fruit of the teacher's toil will thus not only be seen in spiritual results, but in the right guidance of steps which might otherwise go astray from the paths of wisdom and religion.

Such classes as we recommend, will replenish our Societies with young persons acquainted with the Word of God, and loving its sacred truths; they will foster a taste for reading and study; and will assist the Sunday-school to become the handmaid of the Church, and a most valuable contributor to its increase. J. H. W.

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

WHY NOT BE DECIDED?

One Sunday evening, about thirteen years ago, on entering the Wesleyan chapel in which I regularly worshipped, I found my usual seat occupied by a lady, who had with her a little boy. I took a seat in an adjoining pew, and did not further notice the strangers until the service was over; then I observed that the lady had left the chapel, and had forgotten her little one. I went and spoke kindly to him, asking his name, and where he lived. He could not tell me the name of the street, but thought he could find his way home. I took his hand in mine, and went with him. After we had got a considerable distance, we met his mother coming towards the chapel, anxiously looking for her lost child. She expressed her surprise at having, in so strange a manner, forgotten him. I told her I was glad to see her with her child at our chapel, asked her to send him to the Sunday-school, and then wished them both good evening. Thus commenced my connexion with R. I. A——, a connexion which became more intimate as years advanced, and which was only broken by that ever active and often mysterious agent —death.

His parents had lately become residents in the town in which I live. He was sent to the school of which I was a teacher, passed from the lowest class to the highest, and, in due time, he was nominated and received as a teacher. Being superintendent at that time, I appointed him to his first class. I often watched over and helped him in his early attempts to point his scholars to the Saviour. After being employed for two or three years in this sphere of usefulness, he was taken ill of typhus fever, became unconscious, and remained so until his death, which occurred on the 8th of October last year.

I could never precisely ascertain his religious condition, although for a considerable period he was one of my own scholars. I have seen a tear in his eye, when telling him and others in my class of Jesus the children's Friend; and his little lips have uttered, "I love Him!" but I did not observe in my scholar that early dedication of himself to God, for which myself and his other friends longed, prayed, and hoped.

On his becoming a teacher, I thought, surely the time is come when my young friend will fully give his heart, as well as his services, to the Saviour; but no! while the Lord had smiled upon him in giving him health, friends, the many comforts of life, and numerous opportunities of being good and doing good, which he frankly acknowledged; and, although he could not adduce one reason why he should not be wholly given up to God, but, on the contrary, admitted the force of reasons adduced for his being so given up, he still did

not confidently and fully respond to the tender and touching invitation of his Heavenly Father, "My son, give Me thine heart!"

I will not doubt the eternal safety of my young friend; but I am, nevertheless, without any assurance thereof from himself: for, while he was counting upon seeing many days, and when business plans were being formed by him and for him, suddenly, all his earthly prospects were for ever blighted. Health, cheerfulness, and intelligence no longer remained; and there he lay, prostrate and unconscious: his illness, within the brief space of fourteen days, and at the age of eighteen years, numbered him with the silent dead.

How many have been similarly situated! How many are so situated to-day!

Is there not a voice from eternity to the unconverted youth of our congregations and schools who may read this? May they learn the lesson this voice would teach; and, while they may be, as was my dear departed young friend, blameless in their morals, amiable in their dispositions, and useful in their lives, may they also unreservedly and at once give their hearts to the Lord, and their hands to His Church! By so doing they will gladden the hearts of their friends and fellow-teachers; they will be better qualified to discharge their duties, both temporal and spiritual; and, enriched with blessings and peace themselves, they will exert a beneficent and saving influence wherever they are. If they are called to leave us in the morning of their days, survivers and friends will have this comfort,—they are gone to "be with Christ, which is far better."

G. H.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

DR. MARSH.

Miss Marsh, in the memoir of her father, relates the following incidents.

A lawyer, the leader of an infidel club in the town, was met one evening by an acquaintance at the turn of the street which led to St. Peter's Church. The lawyer was only walking for his amusement; but his friend rallied him with the words, "What! are you turning Methodist? Going to the evening lecture at St. Peter's?" The spirit of opposition was roused. "Why not, if I choose?" he replied, and turned down the pathway. Seeing him enter the church just before the service commenced, my father, who was sitting by my mother's side, called her attention to the unexpected arrival, and told her that the subject of his sermon was one against which the unbeliever had especially levelled his attacks. "Shall I change it?" he whispered. After lifting up her heart in silent prayer, she answered, "No, let it be the one you intended; I believe God has a message in it for him." The next day the lawyer came to my father to tell him that his sermon had such an effect in removing his difficulties as to the inspiration of Scripture, that he desired further instruction in the Word of God; and after this he frequently came for reading and prayer. This resulted, under the blessing of God, in his complete conversion. From this time he earnestly endeavoured to spread the truth as it is in Jesus. His younger children, whom he now trained in the Christian faith, early received Christ into their hearts, and surrendered themselves to His service. Two of them became devoted Missionaries in connexion with the Church Missionary Society.

A Priest of the Greek Church, brought by a Russian princess to witness a tea-party given by Dr. Marsh to the working-men and lads of his parish, (upwards of four hundred,) after conversing with him at the rectory, and listening to his address and prayer at the meeting, said, "If there be a saint upon earth, this is one!" When returning to London by the train, he inquired of a young officer from Chatham, who had been staying in the house, "Is that old Minister always as happy as we have seen him to-night?" and on receiving the reply, "I never saw him otherwise," rejoined, "Then his religion must be a good one!"

Ghoolam, one of two Afghans, (present at another tea-meeting for women and girls,) had formed such a reverent attachment to Dr. Marsh, that when the tidings reached him that he had passed into the presence of his Saviour, he exclaimed, "His religion shall now be my religion, his God shall be my God; for I must go where he is, and see his face again."

SCHOOL METHODS.

THE SUPPLY OF BIBLES IN SCHOOLS.

After great practical experience in Sunday-school work, very many visits to schools of various denominations in both town and country, and much serious thought and prayerful consideration on the subject, I am decidedly of opinion that the practice of lending Bibles in Sunday-schools, as a rule, ought at once entirely to cease; instead of a help, it is a serious hindrance to the one great end the Sunday-school has in view, and therefore has become mischievous.

When Bibles were beyond the reach of the poor to buy, it was kind to provide and lend them; even then children ought to have been allowed to take them home, with encouragement from the teachers to use them during the week; but the price now is so low, that every child able to read can easily procure one, and should, therefore, be induced by teachers, or helped by schools, —indeed, necessitated, by not lending, —to do so.

Few Christian labourers seem to have considered either the ease with which all may be supplied, the evils that lending perpetuates, or the immense advantage that must result from each child possessing, and diligently using, his or her own book. Notice how easily the whole thing may be changed.

1. *One sovereign* will pay all the difference in price of one hundred and twenty sixpenny Bibles, if sold at fourpence, eighty ninepenny, or sixty tenpenny, at sixpence. And very few schools will be found to have sixty children without a Bible; unless, indeed, it be children of the Ragged-schools, which special cases will require special treatment.

2. *One month* of decided effort, each child subscribing a penny per week for a sixpenny, or three halfpence per week for either a ninepenny or tenpenny Bible, and the thing is done, Then,—

3. On one day, say the fourth or fifth Sunday, the much-to-be-envied donor of the difference in price, may enjoy an abundant return for his twenty shillings, or less, by handing the precious Book to the delighted recipients; and, at the same time, giving a word of congratulation for any sacrifice which they may have made, but which is amply repaid, for they now can sing, not, as before,—

"Holy Bible, Book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art"—the teacher's,

there being no tune for that metre, but,—

"Holy Bible, Book divine,
Precious treasure, *thou art* MINE."

And surely with no less enjoyment will devoted teachers look on their happy faces, and rejoice at the fact that lending, as a rule, is once and for ever at an end.

As an inducement to the children to make this effort, schools should have sample Bibles, with the prices on them, placed where every child can easily see them. And let a teacher devote a little time to the work of showing them to the children, and they will cheerfully make the sacrifice. In several schools already the habit of lending has been abandoned for some time; yet even in these, few teachers have viewed the practice in all its hurtful bearings; nor have they sufficiently thought on the matter to turn to its best account the advantage of children possessing their own Bibles. The following things should be done at once:—

1. Hold a special meeting of teachers for this one business only.

2. Decide then and there, by rule or resolution, to give up lending after, say, one month.

3. Find a friend who will do him or herself the honour of paying the money, and the happiness of placing in the hands of the children the new books.

4. Get sample Bibles to show to the scholars as soon as possible.

5. Let all teachers encourage scholars to bring the money, and let the matter produce a wholesome excitement in the schools.

On the first Sabbath in 1856, the writer distributed three hundred and twelve Bibles in this manner; and it was worth many sovereigns and many sacrifices to see the delighted children run home with their treasures. Since that time he has distributed many hundreds more in the same way, and he only desires teachers of every school that lends to share in the like pleasure and advantage.

The mere mention of only a few of the evils lending perpetuates, will justify the writer in urging this decision, especially when it is stated that, out of between fifty and a hundred schools, which he has visited this year, not one has lifted a voice for continuing to lend after hearing only a few of the consequences resulting therefrom.

1. It teaches the bad habit of borrowing.

2. It perpetuates a bad tax on the school-funds.

3. It affords opportunity for thoughtless, careless scholars to damage the Sacred Volume, which they would not do if it were their own—breaking lids, tearing leaves, pulling off leather, and so defacing the Book as to lose all reverence for the Word of God itself: this is moral harm.

4. It prevents scholars from studying the lesson in the week.

5. It effectually hinders the usefulness of the scholars in their own homes.

6. It deprives scholars of an *object* or purpose in school-life, which is necessary to keep up their attendance, and to help them to diligence in the study of the Scriptures.

Surely any one of these would justify giving up the practice, though at a considerable cost; but, when we can show that advantage must follow its cessation, little will be said in favour of a bad habit, even though of long standing.

The following seem to be some of the benefits that would result:—

1. If no Bible be lent, both teachers and scholars must bring their own; and, should they forget at first, let the Superintendent stand at the door, and kindly ask them to run back for them. They would soon remember to bring them, especially if made the admission-ticket.

2. Always reading in one Bible facilitates the study of it greatly, and scholars will soon come to prefer it, and wish for no other.

3. If teachers, by preparation, reference, &c., make the lesson interesting, scholars will desire for themselves a re-perusal of it on reaching home, or during the week.

4. The lesson may be profitably reviewed at home.

5. If scholars who have Bibles be requested to read the lesson to parents, brothers or sisters, or ask them to read it, they will thus become an agency, and the schools a power for good, above what we have ever seen. Many parents go to no place of worship, never read the Bible, or help their children in any way; by this means they also may be benefited by reading the lesson pointed out by their own child.

6. By the hope of becoming teachers in their turn, children may be helped in their studies; and may be encouraged also to use their utmost powers to learn the subject by trying to teach it to brothers and sisters. And, finally,—

7. As soon as it shall be known that no child can be a scholar without bringing a Bible, the school will rise in the opinion of both parents and scholars. May the motto of every school in England this year be, "No more charity Bibles." —*The Sunday-School Teacher.*

THE SCRIPTURE-TREASURY.

HOW ST. JOHN TEACHES US TO THINK OF GOD.

St. John's writings bring God before us more particularly under a threefold aspect.

I. God is Life. — The Father is "living." (John vi. 57.) He has "Life in Himself." (John v. 26.) God is not merely the living God; that is, the real God, in contrast to the non-existent and feigned deities of the heathen. God is Life, in the sense of self-existent Being; He is the Focus and the Fountain of universal life. In Him life may be contemplated in its twofold activity, as issuing from its Source, and as returning to its Object. The Life of God passes forth from itself; it lavishes itself throughout the realms of nothingness; it summons into being worlds, systems, intelligences, orders of existences unimagined before. In doing this, it obeys no necessary law of self-expansion, but pours itself forth with that highest generosity that belongs to a perfect freedom. In other words, God as the Life, is God the Creator. On the other hand, God is Being returning into itself, finding in itself its perfect and consummate satisfaction. God is thus the Object of all dependent life. He is, indeed, the object of His own life; all His infinite powers and faculties turn ever inward, with uncloyed delight, upon Himself, as their one adequate End or Object. We cannot approach more nearly to a definition of pleasure than by saying, that it is the exact correspondence between a faculty and its object. Pleasure is thus a test of vitality; and God, as being Life, is the One Being who is supremely and perfectly happy.

II. Again. "God is Love." (1 John iv. 8.)—Love is the relation which subsists between God and all that lives as He has willed. Love is the bond of the Being of God. Love binds the Father to that only Son whom He has begotten from all eternity. Love itself knows no beginning; it proceeds from the Father and the Son from all eternity. God loves created life, whether in nature or in grace. He loves the race of men, the unredeemed world. He loves Christians with a special love. In beings thus external to Himself,

God loves the life which He has given them; He loves Himself in them. He is still Himself the ultimate, rightful, necessary object of His love. Thus, love is of His essence; it is the expression of His necessary delight in His own existence.

III. Lastly. "God is Light." (1 John i. 5.)—That is to say, He is absolute, intellectual, and moral truth; He is truth in the realms of thought, and truth in the sphere of action. He is the All-knowing and the perfectly Holy Being. No intellectual ignorance can darken His all-embracing survey of actual and possible fact; no stain can soil His robe of awful sanctity. Light is not merely the sphere in which He dwells; He is His own sphere of existence; He is Himself Light, "and in Him is no darkness at all."—*Liddon's "Bampton Lecture."*

ORIGINAL POETRY.

BE IN EARNEST.

Be in earnest! Do not linger
Idly o'er the past to dream;
Seize upon the precious moments,
Swiftly gliding, like a stream.

Be in earnest! Sin and Satan,
All our foes, in earnest are;
Shall not we rouse up to action,
Fight them down in holy war?

Be in earnest! Live for heaven,
Light and joy are there for aye;
But the doom of earthly pleasures,
Is to fail, and pass away.

Be in earnest! Mortals, dying
All around, repeat the cry;
Death his prey is ever claiming,—
Who is fitting them to die?

Be in earnest! Pray and labour;
Let thine heart and hand be strong:
Sow the seed in faith unfailing;
Soon shall rise the harvest-song.

Be in earnest! God is earnest!
He will strengthen us to be:
Help us, God of our salvation,
In Thy might, to work for Thee!

E. A. R.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

July 12.—Section V., Question VI.

Charlotte Bell.

Charlotte was born in Africa; and was a negro-girl. She was not called Charlotte Bell when a baby. But, as she was afterwards known by that name, we may employ it. When she was a little child, some selfish and cruel white men seized Charlotte, with her father and mother, and many more black people, and forced them into a ship, that they might be taken across the sea and sold for slaves. An English ship of war, however, caught the slaver, liberated the poor negroes, and landed them at Sierra-Leone. Charlotte there went to school and chapel, and learned the way to heaven. Best of all, she began to walk in that way. When fifteen years old she was taken ill. The Missionary went to see her, and found her happy in the love of Jesus. She said: "I should like to live and serve the Lord; but I am in His hands." A friend said to her, "You feel your heart and flesh failing." The dying girl replied, "But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." The day before she died, Charlotte said to her mother, "When I am gone, nobody must cry. I do not want you to put on a black dress. You should all have white; for I am going to a happy place."

July 19.—Sect. V., Quest. VII.

All Light!

In 1838, the Rev. William Webb was appointed as a Missionary to the Friendly

Islands, and laboured very diligently there for thirteen years. At the end of that time, he suffered much from anxiety concerning the work of God. War was raging in Tongatabu. Mr. Webb was the Superintendent Minister, and wished to do his utmost to bring the war to an end, and to prevent the Christian natives sustaining spiritual loss during its continuance. He had little rest for either mind or body, and often had to witness scenes of great horror. Mr. Webb was taken ill. For a time he was much depressed. All appeared dark around. The cause of Christ, which he prized so much, was greatly imperilled; but the gracious Master imparted peace to the troubled soul of His faithful servant. A few hours prior to Mr. Webb's departure to the better world, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered, and was made a great comfort to him. He could then look beyond the gloom. He exclaimed: "There, there I see the gate of heaven! I have been looking too low. There all is light; and I shall enter there."

July 26.—Sect. V., Quest. VIII.

Blind Copaul.

A blind Hindoo boy, led by a dog, stood at the door of a Mission-house in India. The dog pulled the string, and the blind boy followed the dog through an open gate. A Missionary, sitting in the porch, saw the boy, and asked, in a kind voice, "What is your name; and where do you come from?" "My name is Copaul, Sir. I live with my grandmother; but she is old and poor, and I am very hungry." "Where is your house?" "We have no house." This was quite true. The lad and his grandmother lived in a sort of pit, dug in the ground, with a kind of roof formed of large leaves of trees. The poor lad was cared for by the good man. Copaul for some time was led to the school daily by his faithful dog, and learned the Word of God by hearing it read. But the lad's grandmother was very angry when he would no longer worship idols, and forbade his going to school. Soon afterwards Copaul was sick. He was fond of repeating the verses which conclude thus: "In my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." (Job. xix. 23—27.) "Tell my teacher that the blind sees." So the happy Hindoo lad entered the glorious land.

August 2.—Sect. V., Quest. IX.

Anna and her Tracts.

A little girl, named Anna, had begun to love Jesus. She was, therefore, very wishful to do something by which she might glorify the Saviour, and be of service to those around her. She was, however, very young, and it did not seem easy to find anything that she could do. At length, a supply of tracts was given her, and Anna distributed them in a very destitute neighbourhood. Perhaps she found a more ready access to some of the houses, because she was a little girl. Certainly her gentle and modest behaviour helped her. There is reason to think that she did much good in this way. Some neglected children were sent to the Sunday-school, and some wicked people were induced to go to a place of worship. One poor woman, who loved the Saviour, but was lame, met the dear child, and said, as she hobbled with her crutches towards Anna, "I am glad to see you again, my darling. I have lived through the week on that sweet tract you left last Sabbath." Anna, while still a little girl, was taken to heaven. No doubt she there serves God and does good, though we do not fully know in what manner.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

July 12.—Section VIII., Question V.

The Nature of Prayer.

Prayer should be the expression of earnest desire.—"The offering up of our desires to God." It would be useless for our lips to utter words which our hearts did not mean. We read of two blind men who, as they sat by the wayside, heard that Jesus was passing by. Did they ask for anything? Did they really wish for eyesight? Did Jesus regard their prayer? (Matt. xx. 30—34.)

Prayer should be for blessings which Scripture teaches or permits us to ask.—We must not seek that which is contrary to the will of God. From what Book may we learn God's will? A mother asked Jesus that one of her sons should sit on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His kingdom: what were the names of the sons? That mother wished her sons to be rich and powerful. (Matt. xx. 20, 21.) That was not promised.

Prayer should be offered in the name of Christ.—Until the Lord Jesus died on Calvary, and the Holy Ghost was given to the disciples to teach them concerning Jesus, good men did not expressly use the name of Jesus. But, when the

Saviour was about to die, He taught His disciples that henceforth they must use His name in prayer. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." (John xvi. 23.)

Prayer should be mingled with humble confession.—We read of two men who went up to the Temple to pray. One did not confess his sinfulness, but proudly boasted of his goodness. What is he called? Was this Pharisee forgiven? The other did penitently acknowledge his sinfulness. What did he say? What was his worldly employment? Was this publican forgiven? (Luke xviii. 9—14.)

Prayer should be accompanied by devout thanksgiving.—We have a record concerning prayer being offered by a man, who was greatly afraid that his brother was about to kill him and his family; or cause them to be killed. The man who was in such fear, prayed all night. What was his name? Jacob was in great trouble, yet he found much to thank God for. (Gen. xxxii. 10, 24—28.)

EXERCISES.—What besides our lips must be employed in prayer? Is it right to ask for anything we regard as pleasant? What name must we plead when we pray? What have we to confess to God when we pray? For what ought we to be thankful?

July 19.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. VI.

The Place of Prayer.

God must be worshipped in the sanctuary.—The Lord has directed us to assemble together, and to draw near to Him. This is for our advantage as well as for His glory. We can often sing His praises, and ask His grace, and understand His Word, the more profitably by uniting for this purpose. But it should be regarded by us as sufficient reason for going to God's house, that He has directed us so to do. (Psalm c. 4.) There was a Temple built in Jerusalem. What king caused it to be erected? When that Temple was dedicated, was there a large gathering of people? Who offered a solemn prayer on that occasion? God gave visible token of His approval. (2 Chron. vii. 1—3.)

God must be worshipped in our closets.—By the word "closet," we here mean any place to which we can retire for prayer, where no one will see or hear us but God. Sometimes it is not easy to secure such retirement; but each must do the best he can. The Lord Jesus Himself set us an example of this. We read of His spending a whole night in private prayer. On one occasion, after preaching, and then feeding a great multitude with five loaves and two fishes, Jesus directed His disciples to go into a boat. He then retired to pray. Where did He go for this purpose? (Matt. xiv. 22, 23.)

God may be worshipped in any place.—Jesus was on a journey, and had walked until He was weary. It was noon. His disciples went into the adjoining city to buy food; He sat down on a well. As He sat, a woman came to the well to draw water. To what people did she belong? What was the name of the city near which they were? The Samaritans who lived in Sychar, and elsewhere, believed that people could best worship God on Mount Gerizim. The Jews believed that God could be best worshipped in the Temple on Mount Zion. The Jews were so far right, that God had appointed the Temple on Mount Zion as the place for sacrifices. Jesus taught that, after His death, worship might, with equal advantage, be offered in all places.

EXERCISES.—Ought all to go to God's house who can do so? Where else ought we to worship God? Will real prayer be in all places acceptable to God? Is it not kind in God thus to listen to us? What special promise did Christ make to those who pray in secret?

July 26.—SECT. VIII., QUESTS. VII. AND VIII.

The Model for Prayer.

WE need to be taught how to pray. Christ's disciples perceived this need; hence they asked instruction from their Master. He had previously furnished the form which we call "the Lord's Prayer." He again taught them that incomparable model. "And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray," &c. (Luke xi. 1—4.) Holy Scripture provides for us suitable aid *in various ways*:—

(1.) *By disclosing our need.*—We are informed that, on one occasion, a man full of leprosy came to Jesus, and,

kneeling down before Him, "besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." (Luke v. 12.) Was the leper very ill? Could he cure himself? Did he know of his sad and helpless condition? Did he acknowledge it? Do all sinful people fully know how deplorable is their state?

(2.) *By revealing God's character.*—There was once a large crowd of people on Mount Carmel. One prophet of Jehovah was there; and was opposed by five hundred prophets of Baal. What was the name of the Lord's prophet? A king also was present. His name? The worshippers of Baal regarded that idol as their god. They believed their god had delight in human misery. (1 Kings xviii. 28.)

(3.) *By furnishing suitable words.*—One part of the Bible, and not a very small one, is intended chiefly to assist us in drawing near to God in praise and prayer. That portion of God's Word was designed to be often sung. It is now sometimes employed in that manner. What is its name?

(4.) *By recording eminent examples.*—One of God's servants was, because of his fidelity to God, cast into a den of lions. His name? What was the particular instance of fidelity for which he was thus treated. (Dan. vi. 12, 13.) How often had Daniel been used to pray? (Dan. vi. 10.)

(5.) *By providing the model uttered by Christ.*—We are to form our own prayers after this example: "After this manner therefore pray." (Matt. vi. 9.) We are also to use the words themselves: "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven," &c. (Luke xi. 2.)

Exercises.—Without the Bible should we know what we mostly need? Without the Bible should we have known the Lord's goodness? Are there many beautiful forms of prayer in the Bible? Which is our chief model? Ought we to use the prayer itself?

August 2.—Sect. VIII., Quest. IX.

God, our Gracious Father.

Learn the reply, and the first of the verses appended. Let us then reverently contemplate the goodness and greatness which are here expressed. God condescends to speak of Himself as "our Father;" thus aiding us to realize somewhat of His gracious character. But He has caused the words to be added, "which art in heaven;" and so we are taught how infinitely greater, in everything that is excellent, God is than the wisest, and richest, and strongest, and best of earthly parents.

The goodness of God.—He employs one of the most endearing terms which human language contains. We can scarcely estimate the love of a father. You remember the distress experienced by a father, when his son's coat was shown to him, stained with blood, so that the aged man felt certain that his son had been slain by some wild beast. What was the name of that father? (Gen. xxxvii. 31—35.) Even a father who was wicked, and led other people into sin, was greatly distressed when his son was likely to die. (1 Kings xiv. 1, 2.) What king of Israel made two gods shaped like calves, and placed one in Bethel, and the other in Dan? A good man had two wicked sons; he had not firmness enough to restrain them, yet he was deeply pained at their sin and their peril. (1 Sam. ii. 23, 24.) A father can wish pleasant things for his children which he does not desire for himself. (2 Sam. xix. 33—40.)

The greatness of God.—He is more mighty than any earthly father. Parents are often unable to accomplish on behalf of their children that which they desire,—God can do all things. Sometimes they are so selfish, as to sacrifice the welfare of their children for their own gratification,—God is love. All our parents are liable to blunder, God knows all things. Parents must die, and, if children survive, they must do without father or mother,—God lives for ever. Blessed are they who have such a Father. (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.)

Exercises.—How are we taught to address God? What two lessons do we thus learn concerning God? In what does God resemble a good father? In what is God far above the best of fathers? How ought we to feel towards God when told thus to address Him?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Miss Elizabeth Nodes.

On the 3d of September, 1864, some children were at a birthday party. Their grandmamma had completed her eighty-fifth year, and had invited them and some poor old people to have tea and plum-cake at her home. They sang the Evening Hymn together, and then the good lady

told them stories which she knew to be true; but some of the events had happened almost eighty years before. The aged lady was the widow of that great and good man, Dr. Newton. She had much reason to mourn the loss of such an excellent husband, yet she was comforted by the blessed assurance that she should soon meet him in heaven. So, although she suffered from the infirmities of extreme old age, Mrs. Newton was not unhappy. When she was young her name was Elizabeth Nodes. Her father had been a captain in the army. She had thought little about her soul, but had been eagerly seeking pleasure in worldly amusements. She went to church regularly, and repeated her prayers in her own room; but her heart was not engaged, so the employment of her lips was not real prayer. But her brother, a young officer in the army, died unexpectedly. A strange clergyman, who really knew the way of salvation, was allowed to preach in the church which Miss Nodes attended. God employed the sermon and the bereavement to awaken the young lady to a sense of her sinfulness. So, in the church, and then in her own room, she began to cry to God for help. Miss Nodes scarcely knew what to ask for. She had never heard of "conversion," or "the new birth," or "the witness of the Spirit." But she read the New Testament; and, as she came to understand what she needed, she asked God for the blessings. That was *real* prayer. In a little time the Lord made her unspeakably happy by His pardoning mercy. From that time she really prayed to God, and was, for about seventy years, blessed by Him, until she was permitted to rejoin her much-loved husband in heaven. (No. II. *July* 12.)

The Frigate "Rainbow."

THE good ship "Rainbow" was cruising along the coasts of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward's Island. The weather had been very fine; and, consequently, the officers had ventured somewhat nearer the shore than usual. The wind, however, suddenly changed. It was necessary to get away from the rocks as speedily as possible, especially as night was coming on, and the weather seemed likely to be rough. Suddenly a squall struck the vessel, and snapped the top-gallant-mast. The top-mast was in danger; and, if it gave way, there was no knowing what might happen, as the storm was increasing, and a rocky coast to leeward. Somebody must climb the mast, and cut away the shattered spar and torn sail. The first lieutenant called for a volunteer. Only one offered. All knew that the man who undertook the task would most likely lose his life. That man was William Ellis, who had long been ridiculed by his comrades for praying and reading the Bible. Up he went with an axe in his hand. Soon he was lost sight of in the gloom. At length a rushing sound was heard. Many shuddered, and thought it was poor Ellis. But it was the spar and sail. The ship was saved by the Bible-reader. The officer, some time afterwards, asked Ellis how he felt when aloft. "That I was in the hands of God, Sir. I prayed for His protection, and I never felt my heart more light, or my courage more firm." That topmast was a place of prayer. (No. II. *July* 19.)

Kaffir Thieves Praying.

THE farmers in Kaffraria have some very troublesome neighbours. Many of the natives do not know how to cultivate the land so as to obtain crops of wheat and barley, nor to plant gardens or orchards; nor do those natives wish to learn. They really have a strong disinclination to work. They do not find any pleasure in rearing and tending cattle, nor in any pursuit which requires care and effort. But they can enjoy beef and mutton as well as anybody, and relish well-made bread, and like the taste of fruit. So, many of these ignorant and wicked Kaffirs are greatly addicted to stealing from those who are more industrious than themselves. What may seem very remarkable is that, before going on their errands of depredation, they will ask the help of their gods. They will pray in words something like the following:—"O, my god, look upon me, and take care of me. When I have got what I want, let the sun make haste and go down, that no one may see me." But we need not be very much surprised. Never have the people of any land prayed aright, unless they were taught by God. We need a model for our prayers such as Christ has provided, and instruction respecting prayer such as is found in the Bible. (No. II. *July* 26.)

Old William, of Halifax.

THE aged man was not rich, and had not enjoyed the advantages of early education. He at length became very feeble, and often suffered severely. But Old William was very happy, for he had long been striving to trust in Christ and love God; and he had a clear and brightening assurance that he was truly a child of God. He was about eighty-three years old, so that gold and silver could not have been long retained if he had possessed them; but

Old William had "the pearl of great price" which would be his for ever. He used to say, "It's a grand thing to be a child of God; it is more to be desired than thousands of gold and silver: it's all to me now. . . . The more I've asked of God, the more I've always had. The more I've sought, the more I've always found; and it must be so; for hasn't He said, 'Ask and ye shall have,'" &c. One Saturday he appeared to be dying. A friend said to him, "I think, William, you will not need the prayers of God's people to-morrow." He understood what was meant, and replied: "Sure not, if I'm then with the Church of the Firstborn; and that cannot be long now." The aged disciple was, however, alive the next day. He was told that the text in the forenoon-service had been, "Our Father which art in heaven." The soul of the dying man filled with rapture at the thought that he was, in the fullest sense, a child of God. "Wherever He places me," he said, "it is just there I would be; and whatever He wills me to suffer, that I would bear." Soon he was taken to heaven, to suffer no more. (No. II. *August* 2.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

July 5.—Leaves and Fruit.

MARK xi. 13: "He found nothing but leaves."

1. *About trees.*—How beautiful a tree looks as it stands, at this time of the year, covered with its crowd of pretty green leaves. They glisten bright and fresh as the sun shines on them after the rain: the wind waves them to and fro: they are a shelter for the bird, a shade for man and beast, and they gladden the eye at all times. But we look to a tree for something more than leaves. Some give timber; others, fruits of various kinds: if one of these gives "nothing but leaves," we say it is of little or no use; it is not doing that for which it was intended.

2. *The barren fig-tree.*—As Jesus went, one day, with His disciples, along the pleasant road from Bethany to Jerusalem, He saw a fig-tree at a distance. It stood tall and fair to look upon, covered with its large glossy leaves. Jesus was hungry, and went towards the tree, that He might gather some of the fruit. It was the right time to expect this, for on the fig-tree the fruit comes before the leaves, and the time for gathering them had not come; so they had not been plucked off, yet "He found nothing but leaves." Of what use was such a tree? Jesus said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever!" and presently the fig-tree withered away. The disciples were full of wonder at this. How was it His word had such power? Because He is Lord of all things on earth, and can do as He will with them.

3. *What the fig-tree teaches.*—Why did Jesus thus curse it? (1.) To show how strong faith in God may be. He told His disciples that, if they had *faith*, they could secure the doing of things as unlikely as to cause the fig-tree to wither away. (2.) Especially to teach us something about ourselves. God expects that we should give *fruit* in return for all His care and goodness to us. But what is the fruit He looks for? Some *wish* to do well, and *say* they will; others care only to *appear* to be right; but, if this be all, it is only as the leaves of a tree without fruit. God will not be pleased with such. He looks for the fruit of a good life,—kind and loving tempers, obedience to His word, the heart given to Him. Even a child may yield such fruit to the glory of God.

REVISION. — What is the use of leaves? What should a tree give besides? What tree did Jesus curse? Why did He do this? What may we learn from the fig-tree? What persons are like the fig-tree that had "nothing but leaves?" What fruit does God expect from us?

July 12.—About Loving.

MARK xii. 30: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

1. *What is love?*—It cannot be seen or heard. Yet every child has felt it. It is something *in the heart*, like joy, or sorrow, or anger. No child could live and be happy without love. He needs some to love him, and he needs some whom he can love. Whom has God given you to love at home? A life without love would be like a day without the sun, or a world without trees, or flowers, or anything beautiful. We may be happy without fine clothes, or a grand

house, or other things which riches can bring, but not without love; yet sometimes the love is given to what is not good. If those we love be bad, we shall become bad also. Men, and children too, often give their love to what is evil: they love sin and sinful persons, or that which cannot make them wiser or better. We ought then to know,—

2. *Whom we should love.*—Hear God's command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." How wonderful that God desires the love of such as we are. How wonderful that any should refuse this love! But is this meant for children? Yes! for God says, "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me." It was because "God so loved the world," that He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to die for us, and to save us. This is the greatest love one can show another, to give up his life for him, and this is what Jesus did for us. The life of the body, and every other good, come from Him.

3. *How we should love God.*—"With all the heart." Some are willing to use words of love, but that is not enough. It is to love really and sincerely: to love Him above all others. How is love shown to parents or friends? By trying in all things to please them: by doing all they wish. And this is how we must show our love to God. Jesus once said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words."

REVISION.—Where is love felt? Why do we need love? How should we feel without it? Whom should we love? How should we love God? Why? What will His love do for us? How may we know whether we love God?

July 19.—Death and Freedom.

EXOD. xii. 33: "They said, We be all dead men."

1. "*One plague more.*"—Our lesson tells of one of the most terrible punishments which sin has ever brought upon the world. God had shown His power and His anger to Pharaoh in many ways, and His mercy too; for He had given him much time to repent, and to obey. But Pharaoh had shown his people that he did not care for this great God. So the Lord said unto Moses, "Yet will I bring *one* plague more upon Pharaoh . . . ; afterwards he will let you go." But, as Pharaoh's sin had become so great, this plague was to be more severe than any which had gone before.

2. *The night of fear.*—Moses one day told the Israelites that they were to get ready to go from Egypt, for God would that night pass through the land, and smite the firstborn in every house of the Egyptians, not sparing one. It was a night of fear even to the Israelites. How would they be spared? God commanded that the blood of a lamb should be sprinkled upon the doorposts of each house, and promised that none should die in the house that had the blood upon it.

3. *Death in every house.*—The Israelites got all things ready for their journey, as God had commanded, and waited in fear and wonder. The Egyptians lay down to rest as on other nights, after the work and the pleasure of the day were over: Pharaoh in his palace, and each one in his home, with no thought of danger. "And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt . . . And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians . . . for there was not a house where there was not one dead." The prophet Isaiah once said, "Woe to him that striveth with his Maker."

4. *Israel free.*—Pharaoh called in haste for Moses, even in the night, and told him to go forth at once from Egypt, and to take all the Israelites with him. The Egyptians, too, urged them to go in great haste, for they were in terror at God's judgments upon them, and said, "We be all dead men." Then they rose up, and went forth from Egypt, men and women and children, their cattle, and their sheep, a very great multitude; all freed by the mighty power of God from their cruel masters. The Lord led them forth like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

REVISION.—What was the last plague? Why was it inflicted? When did it happen? How were the houses of the Israelites known? By what blood is our salvation wrought? How were the Israelites freed?

July 26.—The Face of the Lord.

PSALM xxvii. 8: "Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

1. *The face of the Lord.*—This means His love and favour. David very much

wished to get this. He knew there was nothing in the world so good for him. When in trouble, God helped him. When wicked men came against him, God kept him from harm. When Satan would lead him to sin, and bring his soul into danger, God saved him. He knew that God could make him happy while he lived, and could save him for ever after death. But how was all this to be got? Would the Lord be *willing* to treat him so kindly? Yes; for He said to him, "Seek ye My face." How "Great is the mercy of the Lord toward them that fear Him!" To seek a person's face is to seek his presence, to try to be near him, to have his favour. It was this love and favour which God told David to seek. Let us now hear,—

2. *David's answer.*—"My heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." This was indeed most wise. David said it, too, with his *heart*. It was not with *words* only, as many good things are said. David not only *wished* and *intended* to do this, but his mind was set on it. If he had refused to do it, he would have had no safety in life, nor any happiness after death.

3. *An example to us.*—What have we to do with this? Does God invite us to seek Him? Yes, His word is still, "Those that seek Me early shall find Me." "Blessed are they that seek Him with the whole heart." Then, as we have the same invitation as David, let our answer be the same. This voice of the Lord will come to every heart, even to the youngest. Many care not to answer, or they answer with the lips only, and not with the heart. What shall your answer be?

REVISION.—What is meant by "the face of the Lord?" Why did David wish to seek it? How did God invite him to do this? What was David's answer? How do we know that God invites us? What answer should we give?

Aug. 2.—**The Praise of Good Works.**

MARK xiv. 8: "She hath done what she could."

1. *Gratitude.*—Jesus was once in the house of a man who had prepared a feast for Him and His disciples. Many were gathered there to see Him, and to hear Him. As He sat in the midst of the company, there came a woman having a kind of marble box of ointment, very precious and costly. Its smell was sweet and most pleasant. It was such as was used by the great and rich of the land, or given to those who were highly thought of and honoured. This woman opened the box, and poured the precious ointment on the head of Jesus. Why did she do this? What was it a sign of? She had received much kindness and good from Him, and she wished to show her love, and to honour Him in the presence of others.

2. *Envy.*—Some who were there were full of anger when they saw what she had done. They said it was a waste, and that the money it cost might have been given to the poor. And they spoke evil words against this good woman. Even now some speak evil of that which is good, and try to hinder it. But the Lord knew the hearts of these men, and that he who had spoken most bitterly against the woman, really cared not for the poor, but only that he might have the money for himself. Then He reproved those who did this wrong, and said, "Let her alone . . . she hath wrought a good work on Me."

3. *The praise of good works.*—Jesus said, "She hath done what she could." Here was praise from the Lord Jesus. Can it be said of us that we each do what we can for Him? He said too, that wherever people should hear of Him, and of what He had done for the world, there also they should hear of the loving action of this good woman; and should remember her for the honour she had done to Him. Jesus has shown great love to you by dying to save you, and by caring for you day by day. Are you doing what you can to show love and honour in return? It is not much that any one can do for Him. But if a child only does what he can, Jesus will know it, and will be pleased to receive it.

REVISION.—How did the woman show her gratitude to Jesus? What did some say of it? What did that show? What did Jesus say of it? How may we obtain praise from God?

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

67. When the Israelites left Egypt, (Exod. xii. 41,) there was not one feeble person among them. Prove this.

68. What Psalm mentions the sin of Oreb and Zeeb? (Judges vii. 25.)

69. Where have we the first mention of a man being sold for a slave?

70. What Scripture shows that Potiphar bestowed some honour on Joseph after he had put him in prison?

71. Where was John at the time he saw the visions described in the Book of Revelation?

72. What New-Testament writer refers to the sin of Balaam?

H.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

BESSIE S——.

Bessie was not my child, or rather not my scholar, for we Sabbath-school teachers sometimes call the little ones put under our care "our children." Perhaps we may be excused in this, for are we not sometimes their spiritual parents—honoured instruments of bringing their souls into new life? This is the aim of every true Sunday-school teacher. Would anything less than this prompt some of us to leave comfortable homes and quiet hours of rest, week after week, to toil in crowded school-rooms? Yet we go many months with few signs of success; and, if it were not for encouraging texts of Scripture, such as "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days;" "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;" "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," we should "grow weary," and cease our work. But, here and there, buds of promise open, bloom, and encourage us. So was it in the instance I am about to relate.

Bessie S—— was a child of tender feelings and gentle spirit, and of an amiable disposition. She belonged to one of the families constituting the majority of the population of this great city, namely, the middle classes. She had the advantage of a good plain education; but, alas! her parents, like too many others, made no provision for the training of her soul. They prepared her for womanhood, the world, and life; but not for God, death, and eternity; little thinking she was destined for an early grave. I say that they made no provision for her future life: I cannot tell whether they had any convictions as to the necessity of such a preparation; but, at a very early age, they sent her to the Sunday-school, and there she became acquainted with those truths which alone can save the soul. For a long time the seed dropped showed no sign of taking root. Then it began to manifest itself very gradually: first, there was a growing attachment to the school and her teacher; then, she often read her Bible, and, at the age of fourteen, a new one, presented to her by a pious aunt, was prized as her greatest treasure. Just before this, her illness commenced, and, although not in great pain, suffering more from weakness than anything else, she had a firm conviction that she should not recover. Her school and her Bible became more precious to her; and she was thoughtful and studious. For nearly two years death was slowly, but surely, approaching. Her anxious parents, meanwhile, applied to one physician and another, but in vain. It was not until Christmas-day, 1865, they thought it necessary to tell the dear girl that there was no hope of her recovery.

In the evening of that day her aunt, before alluded to, having spent the day

with the family, felt she could not leave without knowing something about the state of her soul, and her prospects for the future. Before bidding her good-bye, she took her into a little room alone, and said, "You are very, very ill, dear; and I begin to fear you will never get better."

Bessie looked at her steadfastly for a moment, then fell on her bosom, and burst into tears. It was a touching scene. After a little, her aunt raised her, and, throwing her arm round her neck, she said, "Do not weep, dear child, Christ will give you strength to bear all your pains: I have been suffering for the last twenty years; but I feel so much of the love of Jesus, that I can bear all He thinks fit to send me."

She then dried her tears, and said, "Yes, dear aunt, and, though I know so little of Him, I would not part with Him for anything in this world. I don't want to get well; there is not much to live for here; I would rather go to heaven."

Her aunt said, "You must read your Bible, and pray. There is a beautiful chapter in St. John's Gospel."

Bessie interrupted her, saying, "Do you mean about the mansions?" She then recited a great part of the chapter, and added, "Don't think I do not read my Bible: I often feel vexed to see those about me so careless and so thoughtless."

"Don't be vexed, dear," said her aunt; "remember we were like that once. You must pray for them, and try to speak to them; and, when you are dying, say something to them; that, perhaps, will make the deeper impression upon their minds: they will remember it when you are gone."

"Yes, aunt," she answered, "so I will. I will try to think of it then, if I can."

Thus the conversation ended. They parted. A few more days elapsed, and on Thursday, the 11th of January, having had some of her young friends to tea, while going upstairs, she ruptured a blood-vessel, was taken to bed, and lay there until the following Tuesday, when she died. During these few days her friends had some pleasing interviews with her. She had been in the habit of corresponding with her teacher, who now visited her, and had some affecting conversation with her, which the writer greatly regrets she cannot give in detail. Overwhelmed with joy to find her teaching had been made useful, she buried her face in the pillow, while she expressed her gratitude in silent tears; and then said to her scholar, "Good-bye, dear Bessie! I will give your message to the class next Sunday; I am sure they will listen to every word."

To her aunt, who went into the room, some time after, her younger sister said, "Aunt! Bessie says she shall wear a crown by-and-by." "Yes," Bessie added, "and a robe of righteousness, bought with the precious blood of Christ." Her teacher had been telling her it was God's way to draw His children to Himself by affliction, sometimes; and to a friend, speaking on the same subject, Bessie said, "Yes! 'before I was afflicted I went astray.' I was a wicked, sinful child once; I was proud and vain, and very fond of dress; I did not always feel as I do now." To her elder sister, a Christian, of whom she was very fond, she spoke confidently and happily of her approaching death.

On Monday she was much worse; and during the night, her pain being very sharp, her father, standing by, said, "I wish, my dear child, I could bear some of your pain for you." She looked at him, and said, in a strong voice, "You can't bear it, father; I have Christ to help me. I can bear it."

A little later, when some members of the family had gone to rest, she, having made a movement, was asked whether she was worse. She said, "Call father; I am going home!" The family soon assembled round her bed. She prayed long and earnestly for her parents, and then said, "Dear father! meet me in heaven." Then, after a little more struggling, she prayed for her brother, who had lately married, and said to his wife, who was standing near her, "Good-bye, dear M——. Come to heaven to me, and bring Willie with you." She then asked for her sister S——, who was absent, and prayed for her, and said, "Tell her I shall be sure to see her there." She seemed a little exhausted, and closed her eyes. Her father whispered in her

mother's ear: "If she revives again, ask her if she has forgotten little L——." She opened her eyes, and said, "No, dear father, I have not forgotten one of you. I have prayed for all." She presently stretched out her arms, and, on being asked what she wanted, she said, "I want Jesus! He is waiting at the gates of heaven for me, and I want to go home. Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me!" Another word was upon her tongue; but before she could articulate it, her released spirit had been caught into Paradise.

It was remarked to her aunt, after her death, "There is another gem for your crown." "No;" she said, "not mine; it must be shared with her Sunday-school teacher, for from her came the seed and the first ripe fruit; so together we will cast our crowns of rejoicing before the one blessed Redeemer, who alone is worthy of the praise."

One word to the dear teacher who led this young girl to Jesus. Accept the congratulations of one who deeply sympathizes with your work, and hesitates not to say this "folded lamb" is of your gathering. May her safe and happy departure to her Saviour's bosom stimulate your zeal, and strengthen your faith. Thank God, and take courage.

London. LAVINIA.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

Tellström and Lapland. With an Introductory Sketch of the Stockholm Mission. By GEORGE SCOTT, D.D., formerly Missionary in Sweden. Pp. 83. London: Wesleyan Conference Office. —Tellström was the first Missionary of the Swedish Missionary Society. In this neat little book Dr. Scott tells the deeply interesting story of his remarkable preparation by God for work in Lapland, just when opportunity for his employment there was forthcoming; sketches the country and its people; and narrates something of his labours and their beneficial results, and of this devoted Missionary's death.

Practical Hints on Teaching. By JOHN MENET, M.A. Pp. 106. London: Bell and Daldy.—A most useful manual of suggestions in relation to the equipment and organization of day-schools, and courses and methods of instruction to be pursued in them.

Methodist Sunday-Schools. Reprinted, with copious Additions, from the "London Quarterly Review." By the REV. JOSEPH BUSH. Pp. 62. London: Sold at 66, Paternoster-row. — Sunday-school government; classification of scholars; attendance of scholars at public worship; separate services for infants; the best means of securing more competent teachers; the attendance of Ministers at teachers' meetings, and their visitation of schools,—such are some of the topics ably discussed in this pamphlet. Its style is clear, forcible, and practical. The author's aim throughout is by no means to flatter; had it been his aim merely to commend the institution to the full extent of its merits, he would have presented it and its results in a more favourable light. He writes as one who believes that it might be made much more useful than it has been hitherto; and who is anxious, by friendly criticism and suggestion, to contribute to amendments in its working. How far we think with him, and where we hesitate to accept his views, we cannot now indicate; but would recommend all who take an active part in the management or instruction of our Sunday-schools, and who wish to perfect their organization and working, to read the pamphlet carefully. They will find in it much to instruct them, and not a few hints and proposals which, if acted upon, can but produce highly beneficial results.

The Regular Service, or the Story of Reuben Inch. Pp. 132. London: T. Nelson and Sons.—Combines scriptural instruction and incitements to earnest and early religion, in a form likely to arrest

the attention of young readers. The numerous illustrations are specially excellent representations of scenes in Bible-lands.

Helena's Household: a Tale of Rome in the First Century. Pp. 438. London: T. Nelson and Sons.—This is no ordinary book. In a very pleasant way it gives the reader the benefit of great literary labour and skill on the part of the writer. He has made himself well acquainted with the leading events and personages of the time of which he writes, and also with its modes of thought and life; he has, in imagination, put himself back among these; and, with much graphic power and truthfulness, has so reproduced and vivified them as to make his book a highly interesting and instructive panorama of the period.

Our Class-Meetings: An Inquiry into their Scriptural Authority and Practical Working. By the Rev. George Alley. Pp. 136. Dublin: Moffat. London: Hamilton and Co.—One of the most comprehensive treatises upon the Class-meeting of which we know. In its modest preface Mr. Alley tells us that the substance of his book was first prepared as a "paper," to be read at the monthly meeting of Wesleyan Ministers in Dublin, and to their request we owe its publication. In its successive chapters, the Class-meeting is spoken of in relation to Methodism; the Word of God; subsidiary ends; Church-membership; the Leader; the Minister; the congregation; Church-finance; and the children of Methodists. Some good suggestions are also given for its more profitable use. It is a judicious and useful book, and ought to command a wide circulation. Teachers of senior classes in our Sunday-schools would do well to read and digest it, with the view of instructing their scholars in the scripturalness and value of this important feature of Methodism.

Jesus the Way; or, the Child's Guide to Heaven. By the Rev. E. Payson Hammond, M.A. London: Sunday-School Union.—The thread of narrative in this book is supplied by scenes and occurrences met with during a visit to the Holy Land. It is written with effective simplicity and earnestness, and cannot fail to be useful and welcome to little readers.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

Of what Use are Wasps?

Many will, no doubt, be startled on learning that a disagreeable insect, provided with a very sharp sting, and which comes buzzing about our heads in summer and autumn, when our tables are decked out with ripe fruit,—in a word, the wasp,—is a most useful member of society. We have the word of two medical men for it; one a Dr. Thompson, of Philadelphia, and another a physician of Bordeaux, who withholds his name. The wasp is stated to be a declared enemy to all poisonous flies, the sting of which causes carbuncle; it also destroys an immense quantity of minute worms that get into fruit, and when introduced into the stomach may cause great inconvenience and even disease. Lastly, our Bordeaux physician asserts that the sting of the wasp is a sovereign remedy for gout, sciatica, and rheumatism. This may, no doubt, be explained by the principle of counter-irritation; but how does he apply this remedy? It seems that this is his secret, which he is unwilling to divulge.

"You do not Know!"

One of our English princesses, when her tutor, a Bishop of the Church of England, said to her, "I find that my instructions have made you but little better," replied, "Ah, but, my lord, you do not know how much worse I should have been without them!" When tempted to think, Sabbath-school teacher, that the children in your class are not any better through your instructions, ask yourself the question, "How much worse would they have been without them?"

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

JULY 5.—Morning Lesson.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE KING.—Psalms xxiii., xxiv.

For repetition, Psalm xxiv. 1—5.

Summary.—In the twenty-third Psalm the Lord is represented as a Shepherd, and in the twenty-fourth as a King.

I. The Shepherd.—Ps. xxiii.

V. 1. *My Shepherd.*—This beautiful figure is often applied to God. See Ps. lxxx. 1; xcv. 7; Isai. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 12—16; Micah vii. 14; Zech. xiii. 7; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 25. It expresses the tender care with which He watches over His people. *I shall not want*,—or, "I want nothing," — "clothes, food, protection, peace," &c.—*Luther*. Compare Deut. ii. 7; viii. 9; Ps. xxxiv. 10. *Green pastures*,—pleasant places for repose. V. 2. *Still waters*,—or "waters of rest." The reference is to the shady brooks, to which shepherds led their wearied flocks on hot summer days. Such delightful rest does the Good Shepherd give His spiritual sheep, when worn out by suffering and temptation. V. 3. *Restoreth my soul*, — when weak and sickly. *The paths of righteousness*, —justification, and upright and holy living. *For His Name's sake*,—as the Holy One. V. 4. *The valley of the shadow of death*,—darkness of the thickest kind, such as that of the grave. Compare Job. x. 21, 22; xxiv. 17; Ps. xliv. 19. David refers to a valley at midnight, surrounded by wood-clad hills, which are infested with beasts of prey, and therefore, full of peril to a flock of sheep. In extreme trouble and danger God's people discern His presence by faith, and are kept from fear. *Thy rod and Thy staff*,—instruments by which shepherds guided and defended their sheep. V. 5. *Preparest a table*, — with all needful supplies; just as a shepherd provides fodder and water for his flock. *In the presence of mine enemies*,—who are unable to prevent the feast, and can do no more than look on with hate and envy. *With oil*,—oil was a necessary accompaniment of a festive entertainment. Compare Ps. xlv. 7; xcii. 10. V. 6. *Dwell in the house of the Lord*, —a figurative expression for intercourse with God.

II. The King. — Ps. xxiv. This Psalm, it is supposed, was written to celebrate the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-Edom to Mount Zion. See 1 Chron. xv. 1—3, 25—29.

V. 1. God, as Creator, is Lord of the whole *earth*, its wealth and inhabitants. V. 2. God separated the land from the water, so that the former seems to rest upon the latter. V. 3—6. *The hill of the* Lord was Zion, which typified heaven. Only the good and true, the clean-handed and pure-hearted, are accounted worthy to appear before that awful Being. *Their* worship shall be accepted, and they shall obtain mercy, because they truly seek the face of the "God of Jacob." (Margin.) V. 7—10. The allusion is to the triumphal entry of a conqueror into a city. The bearers of the ark are represented as addressing, not the gates, but their keepers, and demanding admission for their King. The keepers ask, in return, who this King is, of whom they speak, that He should be permitted to *come in?* The answer is, that He is the *strong and mighty Lord*. A fuller explanation is then required, as if by citizens unwilling to admit an enemy; and again the jubilant throng without reply that their King is the God of armies. This answer ends the parley, and the ark and procession are admitted. The whole passage is incomparable poetry.

Reflections. — 1. *All things are God's.* — The former part of the first verse, Ps. xxiv., is inscribed on the portico of the Royal Exchange, London, to remind the merchants and people of England that they owe their wealth to God.

2. *All mankind are God's.*—If you are not serving Him, you are robbing Him.

3. *God should be glorified in men's daily business.*

4. "*Blessed are the pure in heart.*"

QUESTIONS.—To whom is the Lord a Shepherd? What does David infer from this? What is the Lord's? why? What right has He to you? What is meant by "the hill of the Lord?" "clean hands?" "a pure heart?" How are acceptable worshippers blessed?

Illustration.—ANOINTING.

See Ps. xxiii. 5. "After bathing, the body was anointed with oil, Ruth iii. 3. The effect of this was both to make the skin smooth, and to check excessive perspiration. . . . It was a common custom to anoint the head, especially as a sign of rejoicing, Prov. xxvii. 9; Eccles. ix. 8. Sometimes simple olive oil was used, Micah vi. 15; at other times more valuable materials, Exod. xxx. 34; Mark xiv. 3."—*Scripture Manners and Customs.*

JULY 5.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM. — Mark xi.

SUMMARY.—Jesus enters Jerusalem in triumph, curses a barren fig-tree, cleanses the temple, discourses on faith and forgiveness, and questions His questioners.

I. THE LORD'S "NEED."—V. 1—6. *Bethphage and Bethany,*—villages only a little way apart, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. This order was probably given where the boundaries of the two places met. *A colt,*—"the foal of an ass." Its dam was also there, but only the colt was wanted. See Zech. ix. 9. *Never man sat.*—Beasts never yet worked, were used for sacred purposes. See Num. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 7. There were not many horses in ancient Palestine; asses, mules, oxen, and camels being most used. The ass was an emblem of peace; the horse, of war. The kingdom of the "Prince of Peace," therefore, was signified by the colt He rode.

II. "HOSANNA!"—V. 7—10. *Cast their garments on him.* — Compare 2 Kings ix. 13. *Cut down branches*—from the palm-trees, which were carried as a symbol of victory. See John xii. 13; and compare Rev. vii. 9, 10. *Hosanna,*—literally, "Save, we pray!" They were convinced, by His "mighty works," (Luke xix. 37,) that Jesus was Messiah, their promised King; and believed He had come to restore *the kingdom* of their *father David* in all its ancient glory; they, therefore, would have Him begin to reign, and deliver them at once from the dominion of Rome. *Hosanna in the highest.*—"Save to the uttermost;" or, "Save now, O Thou Most High!"

III. "NOTHING BUT LEAVES."—V. 11—14. *Had looked round,*—had observed the condition of the temple, and what was being done in it. *Unto Bethany,*—to spend the night. *Was hungry,*—for He was man as well as God. *A fig-tree,*—on the road, and therefore public property. See Matt. xxi. 19. *Having leaves.*—The fig-tree puts forth its fruit before it leafs itself; and when the foliage is full, the fruit is eatable. *The time of figs was not yet.*—Figs were gathered after the Passover, and this event occurred five days before that festival. The original, however, is, "The season was not of figs;" or it may, perhaps, mean that it was not a good year for figs.

IV. "A DEN OF THIEVES."—V. 15—19. *Into the temple,*—i.e., into the court of the Gentiles. *Money-changers,*—persons who exchanged Jewish for foreign coins, or foreign for Jewish, as required. *Doves.*—These, as offerings for the poor, would be in great demand for the Passover. See Lev. xiv. 21, 22; Luke ii. 24. *Any vessel,*—baskets, &c., brought to carry away their purchases. *Shall be called,* &c.—The reading in the Margin is better: "an house of prayer for all nations." The devout Gentiles, whose court was desecrated by those greedy traffickers, must be protected in their worship. *A den of thieves.*—They cheated and defrauded the poor in the very temple of their Maker. *Sought how they might destroy Him.*—They consulted together to devise a pretext for taking away His life, with the concurrence of the people, with whom He was high in favour.

V. "FAITH IN GOD."—V. 20—24.

In the morning.—They had passed that way on the previous evening, but it was, doubtless, too dark to see what had happened to the fig-tree. *Cursedst.*—To curse, in this sense, is to doom to destruction. The tree, it should be remembered, had no owner; and, being incapable of fruit-bearing, it served but to mock the hunger of the weary traveller. *Have faith in God,*—i.e., a firm belief that nothing is difficult to Him. This important lesson was cheaply purchased by the destruction of a barren fig-tree; and the solemn words of Jesus, the speedy fulfilment of the curse, and this conversation on the subject, should have made it indelible. *Verily I say*, &c.—This saying about removing *mountains* was a proverb. It means here that he who believes in God will overcome all his difficulties. *What things*, &c.—This is an encouragement to prayer, founded on the power of faith.

VI. Forgiveness for the Forgiving.—V. 25, 26. *When ye stand praying,*—i.e., when ye pray. Standing was a usual posture in prayer, as well as kneeling. The latter seems more humble. *That your Father*, &c.—How can a child, who will not *forgive* his brother, expect his father's forgiveness?

VII. Questioners Questioned.—V. 27—33. *By what authority doest Thou these things?*—viz., (1.) accept such homage, v. 8—10; (2.) cast out the traders, v. 15—17; (3.) teach in the temple, like a priest? *I will also*, &c.—His works already bore ample witness to His Sovereign authority; and had He answered, they would not have believed Him. *From heaven, or of men?*—Was John sent of God, or was he a deceiver?

Reflections.—1. *Christ knows all things.*—He knew where the colt was; and He always knows, not only where you are, but also everything about you. How careful you should be to please Him!

2. *The Lord has need of our service.*—He has no necessities, such as we have; but His work in the world is to be carried on by human instrumentality. He has made the coming of His kingdom depend largely upon the prayers, and labours, and liberality of His people. Come "to the help of the Lord!" See Judges v. 23.

3. *They who love Jesus do not begrudge Him their property.*—The man to whom the colt belonged, as soon as he knew the Master's "need," gave it to Him. What does He ask of you? Whatever it is, if you withhold it you do not love Him.

4. *Christ's followers must be humble.*—They are frequently poor; but the poor are often vain, self-willed, and proud. We cannot be His disciples unless, like Him, we are "meek and lowly." He did not disdain, while about His Father's business, to ride upon an ass; and we must cheerfully engage in any service, however humble, if thereby we can do good and promote His glory.

5. *Fig-trees are worthless if not fruitful.*—All men may be regarded as God's fig-trees. Many are covered only with the "leaves" of a fair profession; and very many more have not even leaves, but stand utterly and always bare, as fig-trees are in winter. All these may yet bear fruit; and if they do not, they will be "cursed." Barrenness is punished (1.) with exposure, v. 20; (2.) with burning. See Matt. iii. 10.

Questions.—What did Jesus "need?" How did He obtain it? What did He do with it? What prophecy was thus fulfilled? What did the people cry? What did they mean? What did Jesus do in the temple? Why was the fig-tree "cursed?" What passed between Peter and Jesus about it? How should we pray? Why did not Jesus answer "the chief priests?" &c.

Illustration.—fig-time.

See v. 13. "There is a kind of tree which bears a large green-coloured fig, that ripens very early. I have plucked them in May, from trees in Lebanon, a hundred and fifty miles north of Jerusalem, where the trees are nearly a month later than in the south of Palestine; it does not, therefore, seem impossible but that the same kind *might* have had ripe figs at Easter, in the warm, sheltered ravines of Olivet."—*The Land and the Book.*

JULY 12.—Morning Lesson.

THE SCRIBE AND THE WIDOW.—Mark xii. 28—44.

Summary.—Our Lord discourses on the great commandment, asks a question concerning Himself, denounces the Scribes, and commends the liberality of a poor widow.

I. The Great Commandment.—V. 28—34. *Scribes*,—teachers of the law. *Heard them*,—i.e., the Sadducees and Jesus. *The first*,—in importance. *Hear, O Israel.*—Deut. vi. 4. *One Lord.*—The unity of God is the foundation of all the commandments. The One God is entitled to all our love. *Is like*,—in character and comprehensiveness. *As thyself.*—See Luke vi. 31. *Is more*,—of greater importance and value. *Not far*,—standing as it were at the door. "If thou art not far off, come in: otherwise thou hadst better been far off."—*Bengel.*

II. David's Son and Lord.—V. 35—37. That *Christ* should at the same time be David's *son* and *Lord* involved a problem which His enemies could not solve; for they were ignorant of His incarnate Godhead.

III. The Scribes.—V. 38—40. *Long clothing*,—flowing and stately robes, to show their importance. *Salutations*,—marks of respect, or deference. *Devour widows' houses*, &c.—Their *pretence* was to impress these women with their piety, and thus win their confidence, the more easily to plunder them. Their pretended sanctity would increase their *damnation*.

IV. The Widow.—V. 41—44. To give to the cause of God is the duty of all who have the ability; and it would seem that our Lord had stationed Himself near the *treasury*, to see how the people discharged this duty. *Cast in much*,—which was creditable to them, and acceptable to God. *Two mites*,—which were *all that she had*: this, therefore, was *more* than the *much* of the wealthy,—"more," that is, in God's reckoning. Jesus *called unto Him His disciples*, to consider this beautiful example.

Reflections.—1. *God must be loved supremely.*—He who loves God with all his heart loves nothing in comparison with Him, and anything only in reference to Him.

2. *Our love for our neighbours must be pure and fervent.*—We must do for them whatever we could reasonably desire them to do for us, were our conditions reversed. If this principle were universally acted upon, what a happy world ours would be!

3. *Jesus knows what is given to His cause.*—Whenever you give anything to Him, think that He sits "over against the treasury," and sees how much you give. Do not forget that He estimates the value of what we do for Him, by what it costs us. Giving which involves no self-denial, amounts to little.

Questions.—What did the Scribe ask? What was the answer? If Christ is David's Son, how is He his Lord? What was the character of the Scribes? What did Jesus see at "the treasury?" What did the "rich" do? the "widow?" What did Jesus say? What did He mean?

Illustration.—"THE TREASURY."

See v. 41. "There was a 'treasury' in the Temple, in which much precious metal was collected for the maintenance of public worship. The gold and silver of the Temple was, however, frequently applied to political purposes; and the 'treasury' was repeatedly plundered by foreign invaders."—*Kitto.*

JULY 12.—Afternoon Lesson.

THE PASSOVER APPOINTED.—Exodus xii. 1—28.

For repetition, verses 12, 13.

Summary.—The beginning of the year is changed; the Passover is instituted, and directions for its observance are given, with orders for its perpetuation.

I. "The Beginning of Months."—V. 1, 2. The measure of Pharaoh's wickedness was now well nigh full; and the period for the last plague to fall

upon the Egyptians, and for Israel to be set free, was fixed. In honour of this great event, not only was the Passover instituted, but the month in which it took place became the first in the Jewish year. The redemption of the world was so great an event, that from it we now reckon time: thus, this is the year of our Lord, 1868. *The beginning of months*,—literally, "the head month." It is called "Abib," ch. xiii. 4; and "Nisan," Esther iii. 7. It answered to the latter half of March, and the former half of April. *Abib* is "the month of green ears." It does not appear which was the first month previously.

II. "A Lamb for an House."—V. 3—10. *All the congregation of Israel*,—i. e., the nation, as represented by its elders, v. 21. *In the tenth day*,—four days before the Passover, v. 6. *A lamb*,—or, "kid." (Margin.) The word denotes the young of either a sheep or a goat. The lambs thus taken typified Christ. See John i. 29; 1 Cor. v. 7. V. 4. *Let him and his neighbour*, &c.,—Two families might join when one was not sufficiently numerous to eat the lamb. *Shall make your count.*—In fixing the number of persons to be present at the feast, they were to estimate the quantity each was likely to eat, so that one lamb might suffice for all. The number, at a later period, was fixed at ten. V. 5. *Without blemish*,—to symbolize the moral purity of "the Lamb of God." *A male*,—to take the place of the male first-born of Israel. *Of the first year*,—literally, "a son of a year;" i.e., a year old; because it was not till then it reached the vigour of life. *Or from the goats.*—The choice was afterwards restricted to lambs. V. 6. *The whole assembly*,—i.e., the fathers or heads of all the families. *In the evening*,—or, "between the two evenings." (Margin.) This is supposed to mean between sunset and the time of total darkness. V. 7. *And they shall take of the blood.*—The law of sacrifice was not yet given, nor a common sanctuary erected: each house, therefore, was to serve for the "tabernacle," and its *door-posts* for an "altar." V. 8. *Roast*,—probably, because a whole lamb could be more conveniently roasted than boiled. *Unleavened bread*,—i.e., bread containing nothing but the pure meal. Leaven is dough in the course of fermentation, and fermentation is corruption; and as the lamb was to be pure, so must be the bread that was eaten with it. *Bitter herbs*,—in remembrance of their cruel bondage; but though bitter, when eaten with the sweet flesh of the lamb, they might not be unpleasant to the taste. V. 9. *Sodden*,—i.e., boiled. *The purtenance*,—i.e., as much of the offal as was fit for food. V. 10. *Let nothing of it remain.*—The lamb was to be cooked whole, and they were not to make two meals of it. This was, probably, to preserve the idea of unity and completeness; and if any part could not be eaten, it was to be given back to God by fire.

III. "The Lord's Passover."—V. 11—13. *With your loins girded.*—The outer garments worn in the East were long and loose; and, when journeying, or at work, the wearers tied them round their loins. Thus, to have the "loins girt," in Scripture phrase, was to be fully prepared for strenuous exertion. *Shoes on your feet.*—These were "sandals," which were not usually worn in-doors. *Your staff in your hand*,—like travellers ready for a journey. *Shall eat it in haste*,—because they were about to depart from Egypt in a hurried and anxious manner. *It is the Lord's Passover.*—The feast was ever after to be called by this name, because God passed over every Hebrew house, and spared its firstborn, when He slew the firstborn in all Egyptian houses. V. 12. *Against all the gods of Egypt*, &c. — The spiritual authorities and powers of the Egyptians were worshipped in their kings and sacred animals; and the king's son, and the firstborn of all animals were slain. V. 13. *The blood shall be to you for a token*,—a sign and pledge that God would spare them.

IV. "A Feast to the Lord."—V. 14—20. *A memorial*,—an institution intended to remind them, in after times, of their great deliverance. *A feast to the Lord*,—a joyous festival; not a period of mourning and repentance. *Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread.*—This is called "bread of affliction," Deut. xvi. 3; but this is, probably, only because it was eaten on the last night of the Egyptian bondage. It could hardly be a joyful feast, if for so long a time the only bread that might be eaten was unpalatable. *An ordinance for ever*,—i.e., through all ages. V. 16.

An holy convocation,—a meeting of the people for Divine worship. *A stranger*,—a non-Israelite who lived with the Israelites.

V. "An Ordinance for ever."—V. 21—28. *None of you shall go out*,—because in that night of vengeance there would be safety only within those doors which were sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal Lamb. V. 23. *The destroyer*.—Compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; 2 Chron. xxxii. 21. V 24. *An ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever*.—They were to regard the Passover as an institution for their posterity, as well as for themselves; and, when they were settled in the promised land, they were to explain the meaning of this *service* to their children.

Reflections.—1. *There is no salvation without obedience to God*.—Israel was safe if God was obeyed. No plan of man's devising would have availed. Had they not fallen in with God's plan, they would have despised and rejected His mercy. It is the same with us. See John xiv. 6; 1 John iii. 23.

2. *Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins*.—Israel needed an atonement, and the blood of the Paschal Lamb was atoning blood. It pointed to "the Lamb of God," whose "blood cleanseth from all sin." The Israelites were to sprinkle their houses with the atoning blood; and our conscience must be sprinkled with Christ's blood. For this, repentance and faith are necessary.

3. *Faith in Christ leads to fellowship with the Father*.—In the Passover-Supper, the sacrifice became a sacrament, showing the communion of Israel with God. The Lord's Supper now takes its place.

4. *The blood of Christ is the saint's security*.—The blood of the Paschal Lamb exempted the Israelitish houses from the vengeance which smote all the firstborn of Egypt; and "the blood of sprinkling" gives similar security to believers. It marks them for God's own. See Rom. viii. 1.

5. *God saves us that we may serve Him*.—See Luke i. 74.

6. *Children should inquire about the things of God*.—It concerns us all to understand the meaning of the holy ordinances in which we worship God. Why were they appointed? What is their design? What do they require on our part? How may we be profited by them? They who carefully ask about the way to "the kingdom," are sure to find it.

7. *It is the duty of God's people to teach His truth to children*.—The Jewish children were to be told all about the Passover. The children of Christians should be told about "God manifested in the flesh." See Deut. vi. 6, 7; Ps. lxxviii. 3—8; 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Questions.—Why was the beginning of the year changed? What was the first month? What was to be done on the tenth day? Why a lamb? Why a male? Why without blemish? What was to be done with the blood? Why? What with the flesh? With what was it to be eaten? Why *bitter* herbs? Why *unleavened* bread? *How* were they to eat it? How long was the feast to last?

Illustration.—Hyssop.

See v. 22. "What a pity that Solomon's botany is lost, in which he 'spoke of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the *hyssop* that springeth out of the wall,' 1 Kings iv. 33. The cedar we know; but what is the hyssop of the royal botanist? Mr. B——, French consul in this city, (Sidon,) and an enthusiastic botanist, exhibited to me two varieties of hyssop; one called *z'atar* by the Arabs, having the fragrance of thyme, with a hot, pungent taste, and long, slender stems. A bunch of these would answer very well for sprinkling the Paschal and sacrificial blood on the lintel and posts of the doors; and over the persons and houses cleansed from leprosy . . . The other was a very small green plant, like a moss which covers old walls in damp places."—*The Land and the Book*.

JULY 19.—Morning Lesson.

Pharaoh subdued.—Exodus xii. 29—42.

Summary.—The firstborn of Egypt are slain, Pharaoh urges the Israelites to depart, they are enriched by the Egyptians, and journey as far as Succoth, where they are further charged as to the Passover.

I. The Death of the Firstborn.—V. 29, 30. The last of the ten plagues took effect while the Israelites, with closed doors and lighted dwellings, were

observing the newly-appointed feast. The palace was still, the guard set, Pharaoh secure, the Egyptian houses in darkness, and their inhabitants asleep. Then, *at midnight*, suddenly, all the firstborn of Egypt, both of men and of cattle, died; and *great* and bitter would be the *cry* which broke the stillness of the night, when it was found that *one* in every house was *dead*.

II. The Alarm.—V. 31—36. All the terms upon which Pharaoh had before insisted were now abandoned. For the moment, he was completely humbled. He was not only willing to let them go, but urged and entreated them to make haste; and even besought a *blessing* from Moses and Aaron. He hoped, no doubt, that their blessing would be as efficacious as their curse had proved. *The Egyptians* also, fearing that all would die, joined in the entreaty. So Moses had foretold, ch. xi. 8. Accordingly, the Israelites *shoulder* their *kneading-troughs*, and take with them the *dough* for the next baking *before it was leavened;* for the command, v. 15, had not yet come into force. A very unfortunate word is used in our translation, in describing what they next did, which seems to make the Israelites guilty of fraud, and represents God Himself as the instigator of their dishonesty. Instead of *borrowed*, it should be "asked." In Psalm ii. 8, the same Hebrew word is translated "ask." The Israelites had most dearly earned these things, and God inclined the Egyptians to give them. Thus was fulfilled, Gen. xv. 14.

III. The March. — V. 37 — 42. *Rameses*,—the ancient Heroöpolis, now Abu-Keished. It would appear from Ps. lxxviii. 12, that Pharaoh's residence was at "Zoan," or Tanis. *Succoth*.—This was probably only a place of temporary encampment. The word signifies a covering formed by the branches of trees, and in memory of this place the Israelites kept the feast of tabernacles yearly in this manner. *Six hundred thousand*,—"from twenty years old and upward," Num. i. 3. Adding to these the women and children, in the usual proportions, the number of Israelites who left Egypt would be about two millions. *A mixed multitude*,—a crowd of people of different nations, proselytes, slaves, &c. See Deut. xxix. 10, 11. *Four hundred and thirty years*.—See Gen. xv. 13; Acts vii. 6; Gal. iii 17. *Much to be observed*,—because then God's power, goodness, justice, and truth were so wonderfully manifested.

IV. More about the Passover.—V. 43—51. These additional instructions relating to the Passover were given principally for the sake of foreigners. If these submitted to the rite of circumcision, they were to be permitted to join in the ordinance. Thus early did God show His mercy to the Gentiles. Compare Gen. xviii. 18.

Reflections. — 1. *God should be feared for His judgments*.—See Ps. cxix. 120. His long-suffering is often mistaken for forgetfulness. Pharaoh thus mistook it; but at last he was forced to fear.

2. *God's judgments visit young people*.—Numbers of the "firstborn," who died in that dreadful night in Egypt, would be but children.

3. *God is merciful*. — The blood sprinkled, as He directed, on the doorposts of the Israelites, saved them. The blood of Jesus, appropriated by faith, will save you. See Heb. ix. 22; 1 John i. 7.

4. *God gives favour in the sight of men*.—See v. 36, and compare Neh. i. 11.

5. *God's mercies should be remembered*.—See v. 42. Our deliverance by Christ is much more worthy to be had "in remembrance." See Luke xxii. 19.

Questions. — What was the last of the Egyptian plagues? When did it take place? What was its effect on Pharaoh? How were the Israelites enriched? What way did they take? What kind of food did they take with them? Who accompanied them? How long had they sojourned in Egypt?

Illustration.—EASTERN CLOTHES.

See v. 34. "Over the tunic they wore a blanket, which the Arabs call a hyke, and is the very same with the plaid of the Scotch Highlanders. They are commonly six yards long, and five or six feet wide . . . Ruth's veil, which held 'six measures of barley,' might be of a similar fashion; as were the clothes worn by the Israelites, in which they folded up their kneading-troughs. The Arabs to this day fold up things of similar burden and encumbrance in their hykes."—*Paxton*

JULY 19.—Afternoon Lesson.

SALVATION BY FAITH.—Romans x.

For repetition, verses 11—13.

SUMMARY.—The Jews, through ignorance, did not receive the salvation of the Gospel. It is, nevertheless, easily attainable; requiring, simply, to be trusted in and confessed. It is alike free to all, and is to be preached to all. While, however, the Gentiles found it unsought, the Jews obstinately rejected it, when it was almost thrust upon them.

I. "God's Righteousness."—V. 4, 5. *Christ is the end of the law*,—i.e., He is the Object at which the law aimed. Compare Gal. iii. 24, 25. *For righteousness*,—or *unto* righteousness; i.e., to bring about righteousness. *To every one that believeth*,—his faith in Christ being "counted to him for righteousness." This is the only way in which sinners can become righteous. V. 5. *Moses describeth*,—Lev. xviii. 5. *Which doeth those things*,—all of them, at all times. *Shall live by them*;—but as all have sinned, none have this title to life or salvation. The law was never intended to make the sinner righteous before God, but to give the knowledge of sin, and to awaken longings for the promised Deliverer. Had they thus used it, the Jews, instead of rejecting the Messiah, would have welcomed Him as "the end of the law for righteousness."

II. Missed through Ignorance.—V. 1—3. *That they might be saved*.—They might yet be saved from sin, though now rejected as a nation; and this the Apostle *desired* and *prayed* for. *For I bear them record*, &c.—The reason of his sympathy with them was that they were attached with passionate ardour to their peculiar religious forms, though their *zeal* was misdirected. *God's righteousness*,—His way of justifying the ungodly. *Going about*,—endeavouring. *Their own righteousness*,—a title to heaven, founded on their own merits. They refused to be saved in the only way in which salvation was possible. Though the Apostle commends their "zeal," he does not excuse their *ignorance*. They might have known "God's righteousness," for they had it put clearly before them.

III. "Nigh Thee."—V. 6—8. *The righteousness which is of faith*,—the method of becoming righteous by believing. *Speaketh*.—Deut. xxx. 11—14. Moses there speaks of the simplicity of his laws,—no great effort was necessary to understand them; and the Apostle adapts his words to the Gospel plan of salvation. *To bring Christ down*,—as if He had not become Man already. *To bring up Christ again from the dead*,—as if He had not already risen. The Gospel puts no such difficulties before us. *The word is nigh thee*,—the doctrine is plain and simple, and the saving influence not far to seek. *In thy mouth*,—to confess. *And in thy heart*,—to believe.

IV. In "Mouth" and "Heart."—V. 9—11. *Shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus*,—shalt openly acknowledge Him as "Lord;" i. e., that He has a right to govern the soul and life, and submit to Him accordingly. Compare Phil. ii. 11. *In thine heart*.—Saving faith is not only a mental act; it consists of feeling as well as of thought. The feeling of the heart, the conviction of the mind, and the confession of the mouth, must be in agreement. *Hath raised Him*.—His resurrection is the great proof of His Divinity. If this is admitted, all the other doctrines of the Gospel follow. *Unto salvation*.—He who has believed, and is justified, must openly confess Christ, in order to his final salvation. *The Scripture saith*.—Isai. xxviii. 16; xlix. 23. True faith will bring with it courage to declare it.

V. Alike to All.—V. 12, 13. *No difference*.—The Gospel places all men on the same footing. All must be saved in one way. *The Greek*,—the Gentile. *The same Lord*, &c.—The Lord of the Jews is the Lord of the Gentiles. *Is rich*,—abundant in grace and mercy to all comers. *Whosoever*, &c.—See Joel ii. 32.

VI. Comes by Hearing.—V. 14—17. *How then*, &c.—If men do not believe in Christ, they cannot pray to Him. The Gospel preached, heard, and credited is that which leads sinners to pray, in faith, to the saving of

their souls. *It is written.*—Isai. lii. 7. How welcome is the coming of such a messenger! *Not all obeyed the Gospel,*—beautiful and blessed as it is; but this was foretold, Isai. liii. 1. *Cometh by hearing.*—Preaching is God's usual mode of bringing sinners to Christ.

VII. FOUND, THOUGH UNSOUGHT.—V. 18—20. *Their sound,* &c.—See Ps. xix. 4. David speaks of the heavenly bodies; but the same might now be said of the Gospel. See Col. i. 5, 6, 23. *Moses says.*—Deut. xxxii. 21. This passage foretold the rage of the Jews at the calling of the Gentiles. *Esaias is very bold,*—daring, notwithstanding the prejudices of the Jews, to declare plainly what Moses had only intimated. See Isai. lxv. 1. *That sought Me not.*—While the Gentiles were wholly ignorant of the true God, and knew not therefore how to seek Him, He made Himself known to them by sending them the Gospel.

VIII. OFFERED AND REJECTED.—V. 21. *He saith.*—Isai. lxv. 2. *All day long,*—i.e., continually. *Stretched forth My hands,*—the attitude of gracious invitation.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *The saved should feel for sinners.*—They should not only warn and reprove them, but pity them, and pray for them. See 1 Sam. xii. 23.

2. *Be candid.*—They who do wrong in some things may, in other respects, have qualities worthy of admiration. St. Paul found some good even in the unbelieving Jews, and gave them credit for it.

3. *Zeal without knowledge is blind.*—It may do great harm while meaning to do good. See Matt. xxiii. 15; John xvi. 2; Acts xxvi. 9.

4. *Ignorance is not a sufficient excuse for sin.*—They who do not know what they might know with study, and pains, and labour, are more to be blamed than pitied. The "zeal" of the Jews for God was commendable; but their ignorance of His righteousness was inexcusable, and was punished by their rejection and dispersion.

5. *The Gospel plan of salvation is easy.*—It requires no "great thing" to be done by the sinner. His duty is as simple as that of Naaman, when he was directed to "wash, and be clean."

6. *Religion must be professed.*—A profession of religion includes an avowed belief of its doctrines, fellowship with God's people, constant attendance at the means of grace; and a humble, prayerful, holy, useful life. They who do not thus "confess" Christ, "deny" Him "before men."

7. *All men may be saved.*—But, in order to this, (1.) God must send preachers. (2.) These must preach. (3.) They must be heard. (4.) They must be credited. (5.) Salvation must be sought by believing prayer.

QUESTIONS.—What did St. Paul desire and pray for? For what did he commend the Jews? How was their "zeal" defective? Why blameworthy? How did they err? What is "God's righteousness?" our own? Who may be saved? how? What is it to "confess" Christ?

Illustration.—"CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW."

See v. 4. "If 'Christ is the end of the law,' he who has not Christ, although he may seem to possess righteousness, possesses it not; but he who has Christ, even if he have not thoroughly observed the law, has all. To take an example. The end of the art of medicine is health. As, therefore, he who is able to produce health, even if he know nothing of medicine, has all; but he who knows not how to produce health, however he may seem to study the art, fails altogether. So it is with the law and faith: he who has the latter, has the end of the former; but he who has not the latter, is a stranger to both."—*Chrysostom.*

JULY 26.—MORNING LESSON.

DEVOUT CONFIDENCE.—Psalm xxvii.

SUMMARY.—David professes a strong confidence in God, and great love for His house; he resolves to seek the Lord, prays for His guidance, and exhorts others to wait upon Him.

I. CONFIDENCE IN GOD.—V. 1—3. *My light,*—to guide. *My salvation,*—in danger. *The strength of my life,*—the Protector of it against those who would take it away. *To eat up my flesh,*—resembling savage beasts of prey in their fury. *Though an host,* &c.—Compare

Lev. xxvi. 8; Josh. xxiii. 10; Ps. iii. 6.

II. Love for God's House.—V. 4—6. *One thing have I desired.*—He had but one wish, and one prayer; namely, that he might never be cut off from attendance at God's house: that is, in his deeper meaning, from communion with God. If this were granted, it mattered little what might befall him. *The beauty of the Lord,*—whatever in Him is pleasant or salutary to a sinner. *For in the time of trouble,* &c.—This gives the reason why David's one wish and prayer was sufficient for him. God protects them that love Him. He *hides* them where their *enemies* cannot find them, and establishes them so that they cannot be overcome. *And now,* &c.—The deliverance was as sure as if it were already accomplished.

III. Seeking the Lord.—V. 7—9. *Hear, O Lord,* &c.—At first David is triumphant in the prospect of danger; but, as it approaches nearer, it appears to become more formidable. *When Thou saidst.*—God in His word commands us to seek Him in trouble. To seek His *face,* is to seek admittance to His presence; that is, to obtain His favour. *Hide not Thy face,* &c.—This would be to treat a *servant* as an enemy. *Thou hast been my help,*—God's past goodness is often pleaded as an argument in prayer. Compare Ps. lxxxv. 1—4.

IV. Prayer for Guidance.—V. 10—12. *When my father,* &c.,—literally, "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord takes me up." They were David's protectors only for a season; but God always would be a "shield" to him. *Teach me Thy way.*—Let me know Thy will in all things. *A plain path,*—or, "an even path." See the Margin, and compare Ps. xxvi. 12. *False witnesses,*—who seek my destruction by deceit. and cunning, and slanderous accusations. *And such as breathe out cruelty,*—endeavouring to ruin me by open violence.

V. Conclusion.—V. 13, 14. *I had fainted.*—These words, which are in italics, were supplied by the translators of our Bible, and weaken the force of a beautiful figure of speech which the Psalmist uses. It is called "aposiopesis," (a Greek word, which signifies the act of becoming silent,) by which a speaker omits a word or part of a sentence, from deep feeling, or to give greater effect to his speech. David means, that if he had not believed that he would experience God's goodness, even in this life, notwithstanding the craft and cruelty of his enemies, something terrible would have befallen him. He evidently hints at despair and ruin. He had believed, however; so, without stopping to say what might have been, he abruptly exhorts his readers to the same devout confidence, that they may become strong like him.

Reflections.—1. *They who trust in God, need not fear.*—If He counsels, who can confound? If He justifies, who can condemn? If He strengthens, who can destroy?

2. *Religion should be our "One thing."*—"One thing have I desired," David said; "One thing is needful," Jesus said, Luke x. 42; "One thing I do," St. Paul said, Phil. iii. 13. The teaching is not that all other things are worthless; but that religion should be the *one* great business of life. "Seek after it," if you desire its benefits.

3. *The desires of God's people agree with God's will.*—Their hearts echo to His gracious calls, being made "willing in the day of His power." See Ps. cx. 3. Read also Wesley's Hymn, No. 214.

4. *The love of God is the only love that is constant.*—See v. 10. Men's love often disappears on the approach of misfortune; but God's love is proved most gloriously in affliction.

Questions.—Why did not David fear? What "one thing" did he desire? why? What is it to seek God's face? How may it be found? What did David plead in prayer? What figure is used in v. 13?

Illustration.—the figure aposiopesis.

See v. 13. "Among all the passages which contain similar aposiopeses, there is none so exactly like the one before us as Gen. xxxi. 42. 'Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me;' . . . (it would have been all over with me;) 'surely Thou hadst sent me away now empty.'"—*Hengstenberg.* Virgil makes a similar use of the figure in the *Æneid,* where he says of Neptune,—

"To Eurus and the western blast he cried,
Does your high birth provoke this boundless pride?

Audacious winds! without a power from me,
To raise at will such mountains on the sea!
Thus to confound heaven, earth, the air, and main;
Whom I—but, first, I'll calm the waves again."

In these verses the angry sea-god hints at some terrible vengeance, and then leaves the rebellious wind-gods to think about it, while he goes to undo the mischief they had occasioned.

JULY 26.—Afternoon Lesson.

SOLEMN PREDICTIONS.—Mark xiii.

For repetition, verses 34—37.

SUMMARY.—Our Lord foretells the destruction of the Temple, the persecutions of Christians, the calamities of the Jews, the coming of false Christs and false prophets, and the last judgment; and exhorts to watchfulness on the ground that the time of His coming is unknown.

I. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.—V. 1—8. *As He went out of the Temple*,—never again to enter it. *What manner of stones*,—or, "what great stones." Many of the stones used in the erection of the Temple were of white marble, and some of them immensely large, being twenty-five cubits long, eight broad, and twelve deep. No wonder this *disciple* was struck with their appearance. *Be thrown down*,—by the Romans at the siege of the city. The ground on which the Temple stood was afterwards ploughed up. V. 3. *Over against the Temple*,—i. e., having it in full view. V. 5. *Take heed*, &c.—Let not every false alarm disturb you. *The beginnings*,—i. e., the mere beginnings *of sorrows*. There were things more terrible to follow, before Jerusalem would be taken, and the Temple destroyed.

II. PERSECUTIONS FOR THE GOSPEL.—V. 9—13. *Take heed to yourselves*.—Our Lord turns from national calamities to prepare His followers for the persecutions they would have to endure. *Councils*,—the superior courts. *The synagogues*,—the rural courts of justice, presided over by three magistrates. Jairus was one of these, ch. v. 22. *Shall be beaten*,—with "forty stripes save one." See Deut. xxv. 1—3; 2 Cor. xi. 24. *Before rulers and kings*.—See Acts xviii. 12; xxiv. 10; xxv. 23. *For a testimony against them*,—that you may have opportunity to preach to them. V. 10. *The Gospel must first*,—i. e., before Jerusalem is taken. See Col. i. 6, 23; 2 Tim. iv. 17. *Neither premeditate*.—They should have special help, making them equal to those extraordinary occasions. V. 12. *The brother shall betray the brother*, &c.—To save their own lives, some would turn informers, and betray their nearest relatives. Tacitus, a Roman historian, says, the first Christians that were apprehended confessed, and then numbers of others were taken, and condemned by their information. *That shall endure unto the end*.—No Christian who continued faithful, it is said, perished at the siege of Jerusalem; and see Rev. ii. 10.

III. CALAMITIES FOR THE JEWS.—V. 14—20. *The abomination of desolation*,—the Roman army, abominable because idolatrous. *Spoken of*,—Dan. ix. 27; xii. 11. *Where it ought not*,—i. e., around the holy city. *Let him that readeth*,—what Daniel says,—*understand* his meaning; for it is soon to be fulfilled, and life depends upon it. *Then let*, &c.—That is "the sign" that "these things shall be fulfilled." Then hasten your escape. V. 15. *Let him that is on the housetop*, &c.—"Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" V. 17. *Woe to them*, &c.—Their escape will be almost impossible. V. 18. *In the winter*,—when the weather is inclement, and the roads bad. St. Matthew adds, "neither on the Sabbath-day,"—when the city-gates were shut, and long journeys were forbidden. V. 19. *Shall be affliction*, &c.—The sufferings of the Jews at the taking of Jerusalem, as described by Josephus, were truly terrible. Such horrors, to such an extent, were never seen before, and would never be permitted again. It was meet that the wickedest of nations should have the severest punishment. V. 20. *He hath shortened the days*,—i. e., He hath determined to shorten them. This was

mercifully fulfilled when Titus, who meant to compel the citizens to surrender by famine, was led to carry the city by assault, thus putting an end to *those days* of unexampled suffering.

IV. False Christs and False Prophets.—V. 21—23. "*Lo, here is Christ!*" &c.—Some would even go so far as to say, "I am Christ," v. 6. The Jews rejected the true *Christ*, and were afterwards imposed upon by *false* ones. *False prophets.*—See Acts xx. 30; Gal. i. 7—9; Col. ii. 18; 1 John ii. 18—26; 2 John 7. *If it were possible,*—if God would permit them. *I have foretold you all things,*—and to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

V. The Last Judgment.—V. 24—31. *After that tribulation.*—After the destruction of Jerusalem, the great event to be expected would be the Judgment-day, which will likewise be preceded by signs. *Sun—moon—stars—powers.*—These may denote, typically, as some think, kingdoms, kings, &c.; or, as others suppose, light, the knowledge of God, religious teachers, &c.; but the words may describe what will occur at the great day. V. 26. *Coming in the clouds.*—So He ascended, and so He will come again. See Acts i. 9, 11. *Send His angels,*—to separate the righteous from the wicked. *The uttermost part of heaven.*—i. e., the opposite horizon, where the sky seems to touch the earth. V. 28. *Learn a parable.*—As *summer is near* when *the fig-tree putteth forth leaves;* so will the great day be near when *these things come to pass. This generation,* — or, rather, "this race:" i. e., the Jewish people.

VI. The Time Unknown. — V. 32—37. *Neither the Son.*—This knowledge was one of the things "of which He 'emptied Himself' when He became Man for us, and which it belongs to the very essence of His mediatorial kingdom to hold in subjection to the Father." — *Alford. The porter,*—the doorkeeper.

Reflections. — 1. *Guard against deception.*—It is a bad thing in any case; but it is especially pernicious in matters relating to Christ and His coming. Hence the earnestness of the cautions.

2. *Nothing can harm the holy.* — If they suffer, they shall reign; if they die, they shall live in heaven.

3. *Sinners may serve God unconsciously.*—The Romans were heathen, yet He used them to punish the Jews.

4. *Delays are dangerous.*—When the appointed "sign" had come to pass, the Christians of Judæa were to flee to the mountains, suffering nothing to detain them. See v. 13, 14, with Matt. xxiv. 16; and compare Gen. xix. 17. You are in danger of hell: are you hastening your escape?

5. *True faith is not easily shaken.*—See v. 22. An ancient philosopher was accustomed to say of anything very difficult, "You may as soon draw away a Christian from Christ!"

6. *Faith, though true,* may *be shaken.*—It is possible for even the "elect" to fall, or why are they so solemnly and repeatedly exhorted to "take heed?"

7. *Christians are the servants of an absent Master, who will one day return.*—Are you a Christian? All you have is Christ's, and should be used for His glory. The work He requires you to do is heart-work,—work for your own souls, and work for the souls of others. When He returns, He will demand an account of all the time, and talents, and property He has given you. He will come in death and judgment, and you know not the time of either. You may not live till the judgment; but you may *die* before to-morrow. Watch, therefore.

Questions.—When was this discourse delivered? Why were the "stones" remarkable? What was to be done to them? What signs were to happen first? What was "the abomination of desolation?" What were the Christians then to do? What great event was to follow? What "signs" were to come before it? When will it be? What is our duty in the interval? why?

Illustration.—"cock-crowing."

See v. 35. "Is not the cock-crowing a very indefinite division of time? I have noticed, throughout our wanderings, that they seem to crow all night long. That is true, particularly on bright, warm nights; and, what is curious, too, I have heard a single cock crow so often, and continue so long, that I gave over counting from mere weariness. It is, however, while the dawn is struggling into day that the whole band of chanticleers blow their shrill clarions with the greatest energy and emulation."—*The Land and the Book.*

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THE

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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

SEEKING THE LORD'S SILVER.

SOME months ago, at a week-evening service in one of our chapels, as the preacher was making an earnest appeal to all his converted hearers to work heartily for the Saviour, he remarked, "The Lord's silver is lost! and we must find it." This one sentence seemed to me peculiarly expressive of the whole work of a teacher, as that work is viewed in its highest and noblest aspects; so I treasured it up. Many a time since then, I have gone to my daily duties, thinking, "I am looking for the Lord's silver;" and the thought has never failed to encourage me, though, at the same time, it presses home the great responsibility resting on all who undertake the important task of guiding the feet of others into the way of peace.

We are seeking the Lord's silver; we may take encouragement. This work, whether in Day or Sunday schools, to be done successfully, cannot be taken up as a mere pastime, or as a respectable mode of earning a living. Unless higher motives than these influence a teacher, the work will be a weary toil, and the spiritual results, at least, will be most unsatisfactory. Teaching—especially Sunday-school teaching—is emphatically the Lord's work. He appoints our duties, strengthens us for the toil, watches us in all our labours; and, when our work is done, His hand will place on our brows the crown of recompense. As long as we heartily and prayerfully engage in the work God Himself gives us, we need not fear for one moment that we shall be left to do it in our own strength. It is the Lord's silver we are seeking; therefore we may be sure of the Lord's assistance in the search. Many a most unpromising piece of ore is put into our hands, which we are tempted to think all dross, utterly unworthy of our patient labour and precious time; but the Lord does not so regard it. It is ours to induce souls, whom Jesus has redeemed, to seek the purity and peace which only He can give; therefore, we may rest assured that He will aid us to secure what He purchased at so vast a cost.

We are seeking the Lord's silver; a work of grave and fearful responsibility. It is not a mere amusement to be lightly taken up, or as helping to fill the otherwise unoccupied hours of the Sabbath, or because some friend is a teacher; and then to be carelessly

laid down on the first trial of faith and patience. Who that values this world's silver, treats it, seeks it, with impatient indifference? But the silver we are seeking is of infinitely more value then all the precious metals of the universe. Surely, then, such a work involves great responsibility. The immortal spirits entrusted to our care,—created by God to be continually aspiring after things high and holy, to be enjoying constant communion with Himself, and daily learning more of His love,—have been clouded and degraded by sin; and, instead of rejoicing in the sunshine of God's favour, unless rescued, will moan and grope in ever-deepening darkness. Ours is the privileged occupation of showing them the way of escape from the gloom and misery of sin, and of approach to the glorious "Light of the world," so as to gain His blessing.

Should not the thought of our responsibility make us watchful, humble, and prayerful; and lead us constantly to examine our own hearts as to the purity of our motives, and the reality of our consecration to God? We need not be faint-hearted. Hard and difficult the work may be to us, if alone; but it is not so to the Lord of hosts, and will He not afford us His help? We are not rambling through life purposeless, and unassisted; but this is our work,—to seek the Lord's silver as He enables us. May He make us wise and diligent searchers, and grant us abundant success!

E. A. R.

EIGHT BAD RULES.

HERE are eight rules, the strict observance of which will soon wean from you the love and confidence of your scholars, and enable you every Sunday to return home feeling convinced that you have neither been blessed, nor made a blessing, in your school-work:—

1. Come to school without having prepared the lesson. Let your scholars read on, verse after verse, without any explanation; and if one of them should be impertinent enough to ask you a question, tell the child to be quiet, and to find out an answer for itself by the next Sunday.

2. When the children repeat their verses or hymns to you, lay the book on your knee, and stare about the school. When they have done, say, indiscriminately, "Very good!" or "Very bad!" when the children well know that you have scarcely listened to a word of what they have said.

3. While the scholars are reading, look listless and weary; arrange your bonnet-strings, or necktie; yawn occasionally; and show by every means in your power that your task is a distasteful one.

4. Do not trouble yourself to study the characters of your scholars. Treat the gentle and timid ones with the same severity as the obstinate and rebellious. Never mind, if you do wound sensitive feelings, rouse pride, crush yearnings after good, and nourish evil inclinations in the children.

5. Never ask the scholars whether they love Jesus, or not? or whether they find it hard to be good? If you do, you'll have to help them, and that would be so "troublesome."

6. If a child has been absent several Sundays, take no notice: do not ask the reason, nor manifest any concern about the matter. If the absentee scholars are sick, do not visit them; you may, perhaps, catch the disease.

7. Encourage talebearing. Do not take the trouble to find out which is the right side of the question. Punish the one complained of; and, if she objects, tell her she deserves punishment for daring to question your judgment, if for nothing else.

8. Do not think of your class after you leave school; never pray for it, nor ask the children to pray for you. Do not notice them on week-days,—or only superciliously, as though you were conferring a favour upon them by nodding, or speaking to them.

If any Sunday-school teachers, on reading the foregoing rules, are compelled in candour to say, "My conduct at school has been in accordance with them, or with some of them," may God forgive you! Brother! sister! pause a moment. Try to realize the importance of the charge you have taken upon you, the evil of neglecting it, and the good which may and will, under God's blessing, result from the proper fulfilment of it. Do not rest until you can say, "Every Sunday, in my class, I break every one of those rules."

M. E. Humphreys.

TEACHERS, AND THEIR WORK.

The subject of Sunday-School teaching is one with which we are so familiar, that to write of it may seem almost superfluous. It is not, however, my intention to burden my readers with the minutiæ of the work; but rather to offer a few thoughts, which, I trust, may be useful for their future guidance, and as incentives to increased exertion and greater usefulness.

Teaching is the great and recognised agency in our Sabbath-school operations; and, if we are to have order, attention, and the higher results of Sabbath-school effort, there must be good teaching in the classes. It may aid teachers in their work to name one or two things which especially affect them.

Perhaps, the first thing that a Sunday-school teacher ought to consider is, *to what part of the work he is likely to be especially adapted.* Let me draw the attention of my younger fellow-labourers to this subject. There are but few of us who have not a special liking for some particular study, or department of labour; and, however much we may strive to adapt our talent to all the variety of duty that is required at our hands, still there are certain parts of it more in harmony with our views and feelings than others; and we naturally prefer to do that which we feel best able to perform. Some possess more than ordinary activity of mind, strong nervous power, and any amount of energy; now, such persons are specially adapted to arrest the attention and gain the confidence of scholars of that rougher type found in our Ragged-schools, and to draw them to a better and higher life. Others, again, have minds especially apt at simplifying and illustrating truth,—let such take our infant-classes. Others, with susceptibilities more sensitive, and minds well-stored with the doctrines of Scripture, and hearts richly imbued with the grace of which Gospel doctrines tell, ought to take the higher classes in our schools. I would strongly urge this attention to specific qualifications

upon all teachers; because, without such a knowledge of themselves, and great candour in disclosing it to Superintendents, they cannot be placed where they can labour with the greatest comfort and advantage. There is adaptation in all God's works,—we see it in the little spider as he runs up his silken web; and in the padded foot of the camel, so well fitted, by its elasticity, to travel over the sandy desert. We ourselves study adaptation in other matters, let us especially do so in the appointment of labourers to posts of work.

Then, if we are to have good teaching in the classes, there must be *careful preparation*. We do nothing that is worth doing without effort; and it would be unreasonable, and a proof of our ignorance of this work, and unfitness for it, did we engage in it without due painstaking, with a view to being ready to do it well. I am aware that the pressure of business, and the exhaustion produced by it, as well as the difficulty of securing needful facilities for such careful study as the appointed lessons demand, prevent many of us, who engage in Sunday-school work, from such cultivation of our minds, and acquaintance with the truths of Holy Scripture, as we desire. Nevertheless, as we have engaged in the work, it becomes our duty to do our best; perhaps, to apply ourselves to it with as much earnestness as we give to business engagements. We have too long put our religious duties second to our business life: let us reverse this order. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness," is a precept which bears upon our labour, as well as upon our personal piety; and let us devote to the improvement of our talent and the cultivation of our hearts, such time and effort as these duties demand.

To teach efficiently, we must ourselves be taught of God. Many of the truths we teach lie upon the surface, like the pebbles upon the shore; but many more are like precious ore, which lies deep in the bowels of the earth, and which requires laborious digging and careful search to secure; and many truths which we need to know, that we may teach them, God only can reveal to us by His Spirit. He can and will, if we ask Him, lift from before our search the veil which else must hide the truth; and will give us not only to see it with a clearness, but also to teach it with a power, which, under other circumstances, we cannot possess. Let us ever draw near to God with earnestness, seeking a holy heart and a sanctified intellect; and then shall we best be able to impart saving knowledge to others.

The mental and moral influence which we shall thus acquire over our classes, will prove helpful in the maintenance of discipline. Power for that we must obtain, and keep up at any cost, if we would be thoroughly efficient in our work. If the children are brought to esteem and love us through our ripe knowledge of the truth, and our unswerving devotion to Christ, we shall have no difficulty in reducing the most refractory to order; while, on the other hand, if we are wanting in acquaintance with the subjects we have to teach, and are weak in moral power, and become the victims of temper, the result will be ruinous to our class, and serious to the school at large.

Let me, also, draw attention to the *subjects and style of our addresses to the scholars*. This is an age of novelty and sensation, and the public mind is too ready rather to pursue what is new and exciting than what is profitable. Multitudes gratify a false taste with light and pernicious literature, and I fear that the infection has reached many teachers of youth in connexion with Methodism. So far as my experience goes, more anxiety is displayed to gratify the taste of the children for

silly story-telling, than to teach and enforce those plain Scripture truths, which, though they may not be so popular, must ever be most useful. I know that it is not unimportant to interest children; but I think, if some of our friends, who are in the habit of addressing them, would apply themselves to an endeavour to give interest and effect to Bible truths, with as much diligence as they now give to the collection of stories, they would do well. If we must have stories, have we not Abel, Abraham, Joseph, Elijah, David, Daniel, and others, whose lives and deeds teach us lessons we cannot find elsewhere? Ought we not more frequently to have the story of the Cross told in addresses? its shame and agony, its mercy and its love? If we fail to secure attention here, we fail altogether. This story of our redemption will be new when every other is forgotten. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;" and "as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." When we hear any one aiming at the conversion of scholars, though he may not be popular, after a certain fashion, let us help him by our kindest sympathy and most earnest prayer. God's blessing will not be withheld from such efforts.

I would suggest, in passing, *to the teachers of Senior-classes*, the desirableness of meeting the scholars alone, perhaps on week-evenings, when they can be spoken to individually about conversion, and pressed to decisive surrender of themselves to God, in a way more effective than is possible amidst the hum of voices in the school.

To sustain order in the class, great patience is required; but, even when order is secured, a higher result is often wanting; and this can only be insured "by patient continuance in well-doing." The prayerful and faithful work of months, and even years, sometimes yields little visible fruit; hence the necessity that, while we "labour" we should also "learn to wait." Patiently persevere in well-doing. It is a cheering consideration, and one which the weakest of us will do well to bear in mind, that success in this work is not limited to the efforts of men of great mental power, but that God often puts honour upon the weakest, and makes them mighty for good. The meteor, though brilliant in its path across the heavens, is surpassed in usefulness by the constant, though feeble, light of a little star. Trust on! labour on! and, even though your scholars leave your class, and, perhaps, the school, without manifesting religious change, you must "possess your soul in patience." Having sown the seeds of eternal life, the truth may be verified, — "one soweth, and another reapeth;" but, in any case, your work will not be forgotten in the day of the Lord: therefore, "in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Many who in youth have resisted instruction, the earnest appeals of teachers, and prayers of parents, and, like the prodigal, have broken off from wholesome restraints, in after life, when they have become the victims of their own misdoings, and found that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit," amid their sorrow and disappointment have felt the instruction of early days come home, rob them of false peace, and make them groan for that mercy which, when first heard of, they despised.

Let us be earnest; half-hearted doings will not suffice for making this world better. This is a good, happy, and great work: come, then, while your energies are capable of responding to demands made upon them, lay them out for God, "before the night cometh," when health and energy fail, and

opportunities for good pass away. Work, work for Christ and souls! If it be true that every star which lights up the firmament is a silent teacher for God; that every bird which balances its pinions in the air testifies of His power and goodness; that every fragrant violet of the hedgerow is fulfilling a mission of serving,—then it is equally true that we have our mission too: and are we to be behind the natural products and inferior creatures in our duty to God, our Creator and Redeemer? They serve, adorn, and beautify the world; but ours is a nobler mission. We may desire to be rich, and be utterly defeated; we may strive to become great in the earth, and find that we cannot succeed; but, if we labour earnestly for God, we shall be sure of the commendation of Him who said of Mary, "She hath done what she could."

All earth's beauty, associations, strength, and grandeur pass away, "but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Newcastle-upon-Tyne. R. S.

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

A NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITY.

One Sabbath evening, on looking over the roll of my class, I found that, among others, Ann —— had to be marked among the absentees. I took a note on my visiting-list, intending to call during the week, according to custom; but, afterwards, as the girl's house was a very little out of my way, I thought there could be no great harm in delaying my call for a week.

The Sabbath returned again, and I found myself once more in the school with my children around me; and, though feeling a little uneasiness that Ann —— was still absent, it soon wore off, and was forgotten in the excitement of teaching. The lessons were concluded, and we were about to engage in praise, when a neighbouring teacher stepped across the floor to me, and said, very seriously,—

"Have you a girl in your class of the name of Ann ——?"

"Yes; what of that?"

"I have something to tell you about her," said he, hesitating.

"What is it? What is the matter?" said I, with a presentiment of something being wrong.

"She is dead!"

"Dead!"

"Yes; she died four days ago. She was buried yesterday. Her brother is in my class, and brought word last Sabbath that she was ill, and wished to see you; but I forgot to tell."

"O! if you had only told me! I wish you had told me!"

"I am very sorry I did not."

My heart sank within me. I could not speak. Dead! Gone from this world for ever; gone from any power or means I could use. Is she saved, or lost?—a sinner in hell, or a saint in glory? Dead! and I not at her death-bed? Have I done my duty to her? Have I done all I could? Alas! alas! my conscience, now fully aroused, told me I had not. There was no want of time. What I wanted was *inclination*. I felt I ought to have called *at once*, and then some opportunity would have been afforded me of smoothing her pillow, and speaking peace and comfort to my dying scholar. But now it was *too late*. The thought was bitter anguish. I knew my duty, but did it not.

I called on the mourning parents next day. For a few minutes nothing was said. At last I spoke.

"So Ann is gone to her rest?"

"Yes, Sir," said her mother; "she is gone."

"How did she die?"

"We don't know, Sir; we hope she is in heaven."

"Had she much pain?"

"Very little; she just sleepit awa'."

"Was she happy in her mind?"

"We hope sae. She could speak but little for three days before her death."

"I am very sorry I was not here to see her."

"Ay, we thought you might have come; but," said the mother, reproachfully, "we sent you word, but you didna come. Puir thing! Annie was fond of the Sabbath-class, and would not stay away, wet or dry;"—and she burst into tears.

I explained, as well as I could, why I had not come when sent for; but I could not excuse *myself*. Time—means—opportunity: I had neglected them all.

And now, why do I write this? It is to urge on my fellow-teachers never to let slight excuses induce them to defer visiting their scholars; and thus they shall not have cause to lament, as I do,

A NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITY.

WILLIE'S DIARY.

Saturday, October 20th, 1866.—Feel that God is indeed merciful to spare me, a sinner. I desire to cast myself on God.

Sunday, 21*st*.—I feel that I must put more trust in the merits of Christ. I feel that I am indeed a great sinner; but Jesus died for me.

Monday, 22*d*.—Feel that I ought to mourn for my sin, which I feel to be very great.

Tuesday, 23*d*.—I pray God to guide me, and to help me to resist the devil, and then I know he will flee from me.

Thursday, 25*th*.—I feel this morning that I am a great sinner; but I feel that Jesus Christ can, and will, save me. Felt that God was very good to bestow so many blessings.

Friday, 26*th*.—I feel desirous that I should be one of those who shall sit with Christ on His throne. I pray God to direct me in all I do, both as regards worldly and spiritual matters.

Saturday, 27*th*.—I desire to be ready for to meet the Bridegroom. O God, make me ready. Give me a new heart. Help me to love Thee.

Sunday, 28*th*.—I feel that I am not prepared to die; but I desire that God would prepare my heart to meet Him. Heard Mr. Robinson, in the morning, on St. Matt. v. 16; and Mr. Roberts, in the evening, on the "Refuge."

Monday, 29*th*.—I feel that I must try to deny myself more for Christ; and I resolve this week to be better than I have ever been before, God helping me.

Wednesday, 31*st*.—Feel to-day that Christ has washed away all my sins, and cannot thank Him enough for His goodness.

Friday, November 2*d*.—Feel that Christ is all in all to me; that I have great pleasure in being one of God's servants.

Saturday, 3*d*.—I feel that it is a pleasant thing to love God. I feel how different were last week's emotions to these: then I was wishing that God would wash all my sins away, now I am rejoicing in the belief that I have been washed in His precious blood.

Sunday, 4*th*.—Feel that Satan is trying to make me doubt that I have been saved. But I feel that God can dispel all these doubts and fears, and I pray Him to do so.

Such is Willie's Diary. And, is it asked, who was Willie? Well, his name is of little importance,—suffice it to say that he was first a scholar, and then a junior teacher, in the Hackney-road Chapel Wesleyan Sunday-school. It will be observed the last entry, above written, is dated Sunday, November 4th. The following Sunday (November 11th) he was at his school, morning and afternoon, in health, happily engaged in his duties. On the following Wednesday morning, November 14th, he died suddenly, in his bed, in his fifteenth year.

And now, dear reader, permit me to ask, what are your thoughts on perusing

Willie's Diary? You see he was young, and yet how earnestly he appears to have thought about his soul! How deeply, day after day, he felt the burden of his sins! How he seems to have longed and prayed for deliverance! and, when it came, what a happy change it wrought in him. Have you, my (perhaps *young*) friend, so thought about your soul; so felt the burden of your sins; so longed for forgiveness, and so trusted in Jesus, as to be now rejoicing in the happy belief that His precious blood has washed all your sins away. O! if you are thus happy, still cleave to Jesus Christ, and never allow the great enemy of your soul to rob you of your "confidence" in Christ; for it hath "great recompense of reward." But, if it is not so with you, then let me urge you to hear the voice which calls to you from Willie's early grave,—"Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." You need salvation just as much as dear Willie did; and, praise the Lord! you may have it just as freely, "without money, and without price." Pray for a penitent heart, and "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And, being saved, O how happy you will be; and if, like Willie, you are a Sabbath-school teacher, how much more heartily and earnestly will you engage in your Sabbath-duties, and how will you long for and plead with your youthful charge to love the precious Saviour you have found!

Reader, are you a Sabbath-school teacher? then think, once more, of dear Willie,—*at his school, in health, on one Sunday; on the next Sunday, in his grave!* Listen, again, to the voice which speaks from that early grave. How solemnly it now peals forth its warning tones! "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, *do it with thy might:*" "Work while it is called *to-day.*"

Beloved friend! what were your thoughts, as you sat in your class, last Sunday? How did you feel about, and discharge, your responsibility? Did you think, act, and teach as though it might be *your last interview* with your scholars? Did you spare no effort; but with "cries, entreaties, tears," strive to win your scholars to Jesus? What if, supposing you are permitted to return to that class next Sunday morning, you shall be told, "Teacher! Mary, who was present last Sunday, died suddenly last Wednesday morning!" Or what if, instead of your expected presence at school, next Sunday, your Superintendent shall be told that you have been snatched away by death? O, again let the voice from Willie's early grave be heard! "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might:" "Work while it is called to-day;" for "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find" so doing. Dear reader, that that blessedness may be yours, is the earnest prayer of

WILLIE'S FATHER.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

A SOLDIER'S CONVERSION.

A SOLDIER, who greatly loved the Lord Jesus, related to me somewhat of his former life, which had been an eventful one. Much did he tell me of hairbreadth escapes, of adventures both by sea and land; but of these I will not speak now, but will tell you how he came to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus: and I pray that the story of his conversion may be blessed to some soul.

He was above thirty years of age at the time of my acquaintance with him.

"I have," said he, "been ten years a soldier, and have marched with my regiment through the whole of Hanover, have crossed the border, and have fought in Schleswig-Holstein. I have lived in cities, in towns, and in villages, and am well acquainted with both land and people. I have marched on foot, and have travelled by rail; I have lived in plenty, and suffered want; I have danced in ball-rooms, and sighed in hospitals. Owing to a naturally amiable disposition, I was a favourite with both officers and men; and wherever our regiment was quartered, I made myself friendly with the people. If I had been asked what religion I professed, I should have called myself a 'Christian;' but, alas! of Christianity I knew nothing. I went, indeed, to church, on certain occasions; but, whether it was that our officers always remained standing outside while we attended Divine service, or whether it was the preacher's fault, I know not; but of Christianity and of Christ I learned nothing. My 'religion' consisted in this,—that it was a disgrace to steal, and a duty to be obedient to one's superiors. I did not know that it was the greatest sin of all for a man to live without God, for a Christian to live without Christ. I had no Bible; I could not pray; and never, in the whole course of my experience, had I heard the sound of prayer, or the singing of psalms, but in the church, where I joined in neither. It seems strange to me now that, in this godless state, I committed no gross sins or crimes. The reason may be, that I prided myself on being an orderly and well-living man. Yet I felt a want, an unsatisfied longing,—for what I knew not. Once when, on the king's birthday, our regimental band played the chorale, 'Now, all thank God,' tears filled my eyes,—I knew not for what. How dreadful," continued he, "to think of living for thirty years in Protestant Germany, to serve in a Christian army, to live in Christian towns and villages, and yet never, during all that time, to know anything of God or of Christ!

"One day I came to a village where we were to rest eight days, and it fell to my lot to be quartered with a farmer. He received me very kindly; and, after showing me the room he had assigned to me, asked whether I would dine alone, or with his family. I replied, that I preferred doing the latter; and he led me into a room, where the family and a number of farm-servants were sitting at table. But how astonished was I when, after dinner had been served, all rose and stood, with the greatest reverence, while the father, with devout voice, began: 'All eyes wait upon Thee, Lord, and Thou givest them their meat in due season.' 'Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing!' Then followed the Lord's Prayer, and the conclusion of Luther's blessing before food, and the words, 'May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, bless this food to us. Amen!' All, even the youngest children, stood reverently with folded hands; and one could see that they prayed inwardly. I had stood also, out of courtesy; but I trembled from inward emotion. I ate but little; and the farmer, thinking that my want of appetite arose from bashfulness, pressed me kindly to take more food. When all were finished,—and a right joyful meal had it been—all stood, as at the first; and the father said, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever:' and so on. Then all shook hands, kindly and heartily, and gave one another the usual salutation, and all went away, the children to school, the servants to their work.

"Quiet and thoughtful, I had seated myself in a corner of the room, when the youngest child, a boy of three years, came, and, climbing up to my knee, looked up in my face, and, with

winning frankness, said, 'Tell me about the Saviour.' I began, in my confusion, to tell him of sheep and of goats, of dogs and of horses; for of the Saviour I knew nothing. This amused him for a while, but he soon renewed his petition that I should tell him about the Saviour; and I was obliged to confess that I knew nothing of Him. 'And you so big,' said the child, 'and know nothing about the Saviour! then you cannot go to heaven.' It was true, indeed, that I had never thought of heaven; but to hear my condemnation from the lips of a child, the thought was dreadful! I went out, and visited my comrades in the village; still I could not shake off my uneasiness; and I determined to let supper-time pass before I went back.

"At nine o'clock I returned. Supper was over, but a portion had been kept for me. I began to eat, when the youngest child, who was just going to bed, ran up to me, and said, 'First pray, then eat!' This was a new thrust. I could not pray; but the child clasped his hands, and prayed for me: 'Come, Lord Jesus, be our Guest, and bless what Thou hast prepared. Amen.' 'So pray,' said the child, and ran off to bed. I sat overpowered with emotion. The servants entered, and family-worship was held. First singing—such singing as thrilled my heart; then a chapter of the Bible was read, and a difficult passage, here and there, was explained. Prayer followed, in which forgiveness of sins, the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and the protection of God, during the night, from the evil one were besought. All seemed like a dream to me. I dared not open my eyes, and yet I felt glad at heart. Then followed kind 'good-nights,' and each left the room with his Bible. The farmer and his wife remained to read a chapter for themselves; and, he seeing me, reached me a Bible, saying, — 'perhaps, I would like to read a few more of God's blessed words.' I thanked him, read a few words, of which I understood nothing, and retired; but, before going to bed, I kneeled down, and prayed: 'God, Thou God of this house, be my God also.'

"The next day was a decisive one for me. All went to church except one, who remained, as they expressed it, to keep watch at home; and that day I held a 'God's service' which I shall never forget. Since then I have lived a new life; and I now love the Lord Jesus with my whole heart, and rejoice in the hope that I shall go to heaven."

Is it not strange that this soldier should have lived so long in a Christian land, should have dwelt in Christian houses, and have seen no indication of the Saviour's presence till he came to this farmer's house, and found Him there? Had he come into your house, would he have found the Saviour with you? Does the light stand with you on the candlestick, or under a bushel? From henceforth make this covenant with Him, — you and your families: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

A LESSON IN FAITH.

It was a time of spiritual awakening in a small manufacturing town. The foreman in a department of one of the factories became anxious about his soul. He was directed to Christ, as the sinner's only refuge, by many, and by his own master among the rest; but it seemed to be without result. At last his master thought of reaching his mind, and bringing him to see the sincerity of God in the Gospel, by writing a note, asking him to come to see him at six o'clock, after he left "the work.'

He came promptly, with the letter in his hand. When ushered into his

room, his master inquired, "Do you wish to see me, James?"

James was confounded; and, holding up the note requesting him to come, said, "The letter! the letter!"

"O," said his master, "I see you believe that I wanted to see you; and, when I sent you the message, you came at once."

"Surely, Sir! surely, Sir!" replied James.

"Well, see, here is another letter, in which you are sent for by One equally in earnest," said his master, holding up a slip of paper with some texts of Scripture written on it.

James took the paper, and began to read slowly: "Come—unto—Me—all ye—that—labour," &c. His lips quivered, his eyes filled with tears; and, nearly choking with emotion, he thrust his hand into his jacket-pocket, grasping his large red handkerchief, with which he covered his face; and there he stood for a few moments, not knowing what to do. At length he inquired,—

"Am I just to believe *that* in the same way I believed your letter?"

"Just in the same way," rejoined the master. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater."

This expedient was owned of God in setting James at liberty. He was a happy believer that very night, and has continued to go on his way rejoicing in God his Saviour, and pointing others to Calvary.

EVERY HOUSE HAS ITS CROSS.

A WIDOW lady was almost in despair from the variety of hindrances, vexations, and disappointments she had to endure. She was quite overwhelmed with her domestic crosses, and had scarcely the heart to go on with her daily conflicts. "No other roof," she complained, "is so constantly beset with misery as mine." She had no idea that any neighbour of hers was half so crossed as herself; judging, as she did, from outward appearances. But it pleased God to teach her a most wholesome lesson in a singular way.

One night she dreamed that a whole town stood before her, and every house in it bore a cross against its door. On one it was a very large one; on the next it was of less size; and on others, though they were very few, it was but a small one. Among all the crosses, however, none appeared to her so inconsiderable and light to carry as that at her own door. She awoke a new creature. What she had seen she understood; and she recollected Christ's saying, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." She fell down upon her knees at once, and prayed God to pardon her for her complaining, murmuring, and repining spirit; and besought Him to release her from it, and fill her with a spirit of patience, submissiveness, and content with His orderings. And she implored Him also to endow her with His strengthening grace to enable her to bear her cross, which from that hour forward she found to be light as compared with the cross her own weakness had given her to bear. "Yes," she exclaimed, "'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me:' for His 'yoke is easy, and His burden is light.'"

THE SCRIPTURE-TREASURY.

"BUT."

HAS it ever occurred to the reader to mark, in almost numberless passages in the Bible, the half-magical power of the little word "but?" Like an enchanter's wand, it suddenly turns light

to darkness, or darkness to light; makes the dweller in dust to awake and sing, or fills the festive hall with horror, as if a handwriting from heaven had appeared on the wall. After considerable trouble, King David's plot against Uriah succeeds at last; the dreaded soldier will appear no more in Jerusalem; Bathsheba is brought to the palace; and, amid the festivity and gladness of a royal wedding, the great crime seems in a fair way to be forgotten. Suddenly, however, as we read the history, the whole scene is changed into gloom; a portentous darkness comes down,—all at the bidding of the word "but," which demands the insertion of a little extra clause in the narrative: "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." In another place we have a striking sketch of a Syrian warrior; a picture of a prosperous man into which every brilliant colour seems to enter. "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the King of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour." At this point, however, the painter seems suddenly to dip his brush in ink, and dash it remorselessly against the brilliant colouring; and in our English Bible it is at the bidding of the same little word the sudden change is made: "But he was a leper." In the concise forms of the Hebrew tongue it is not even necessary to express the "but." The contrast is marked by the single word, "a leper;" standing in its naked expressiveness at the close of the gorgeous description, it needs no disjunctive particle to indicate the change of view; no more than if you were to describe a man as being in the best of health, and, after dwelling elaborately on the healthy state of every organ, were to add in a moment that he had just swallowed a dose of deadly poison.

The most striking cases, however, of the talisman-power of the word "but" in our Bible, are those in which man's state as a sinner is contrasted with his state of salvation through Christ. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; *but* in Me is thine help." "The wages of sin is death; *but* the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; *but* the righteous into life eternal." "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: *but* now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Perhaps the most remarkable instance of any, occurs in the beginning of the second chapter of the Ephesians. Nothing can be blacker than the picture drawn there of the natural condition of the members of that Church. They were "dead in trespasses and sins." Dead, however, in a sense that implied neither rest nor peace, because they were possessed and driven by lusts of evil, and spirits of darkness, that, like the devils in the herd of swine, were forcing them to the brink of a terrible precipice. The first three verses of the chapter (omitting the words in italics, "*hath He quickened*," in the first verse, which at that place rather weaken the sense than improve it) are a dramatic representation of this frightful state. A host of human beings, blind and ghastly as corpses, are hurrying tumultuously along, impelled by wild, infernal impulses, down a steep place to the edge of the gulf. Their doom seems inevitable; they are rushing at such a pace, and with such momentum, that no power on earth can save them. Suddenly, however, an Arm is stretched out from heaven. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. As though it were in a dissolving view, the picture of wild tumult and ghastly ruin gives place all

of a sudden to one of Heavenly life and tranquillity. And the change is again introduced by the same magical word: "*But* God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."—*Sunday Magazine.*

ORIGINAL POETRY.

"LAND AHEAD!"

'Twixt ocean and horizon,
Like a far-off fleet of clouds,
So the land-line stretches dimly;
And seamen from the shrouds
Sing out, as the flapping sails they spread,
"Ho! land ahead! Ho! land ahead!"

The deck is quickly crowded,
And the shout goes gaily round,
As, in hazy distance shrouded,
Olden hill-tops, azure crown'd,
Dawn slowly on our steadfast view,
Beyond the breezy billows blue.

Now the rocky coast is looming
In rugged outline grand;
And our signal-guns are booming,
To hail the long-sought strand;
From the cliffs hang out the streamers gay,
Which smilingly beckon us up the bay.

See ye not the wafted greeting
Of friends, who welcomes wave?
O! the hope of this blissful meeting
Hath kept our spirits brave,
Through the weeks that have pass'd so wearily,
In this lingering ship, o'er the lonely sea.

Lone voyager! homeward toiling,
O'er troubled waters dark,
With winds contrary foiling
Thy feeble, foundering bark,
Turn to the chart,—there is land ahead;
See the coast-lights gleaming, white and red.

Though the night be long and dreary,
And thy strength be ebbing fast,
Yet faint not, nor be weary,
For the storm is well-nigh past:
Look up! through the reft clouds is radiance shed;
The day is breaking,—there's land ahead!

Yonder they wait to greet thee,
Who landed safe before;
With angel-bands they'll meet thee
On the bright, eternal shore;
And, "Lo! I am with thee," the Master hath said;
Thy tatter'd sail loose,—there is land ahead!

Bagslate, near Rochdale. M. T.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

August 9.—Section V., Question X.

Chapel; or Races.

A middle-aged woman residing in the south of Yorkshire was very ill. She had, unhappily, led a very wicked life. Though several places of worship were not far from her house, she had gone to none of them. She was, however, greatly afraid of death; for she knew she had sinned very grievously against the holy God into whose presence she must enter at the close of life. Some Wesleyan Methodists visited her, and prayed with her. She certainly wished to go to heaven, if she could no longer stay in this world. But it was doubtful whether she really wished to be saved from her sins, and made "holy in heart and life." She told

her godly visiters, however, that, if she was spared, she would, the very first opportunity, go to the chapel, which was not many yards from her dwelling. The Lord raised her up from that bed of sickness. Before she was well enough to leave the house, she affirmed: "I will be at Doncaster races next week, if I have to hire a coach to myself from my own door." She went to the races. Soon after she sickened, and died. There was little or no hope in her end.

Aug. 16.—Sect. V., Quest. XI.

Kitty's Difficulty.

Little Kitty had a lesson to learn which she could scarcely master. It was not a sum in long division, or a rule in syntax: Kitty had not got so far as that. She was a very little girl. What she often failed to do was to say, "Please." She had not yet got rid of pride, and self-will, and other naughty tempers. One day she could not get her small boot on to her foot, and so she ordered Bridget to pull it on. Mamma overheard, and told Kitty to say, "Please." This the foolish child was unwilling to do. So the little foot was without a boot, and the peevish girl was upstairs when her Papa came to dinner. He went to talk to the child, whom he dearly loved, but whose naughty ways he deplored. In reply to his questions, Kitty said, "O, Papa, it would not come out of my throat! 'Please' would stay there: it almost choked me; but it will come now." So she said, "Please, Bridget, put my shoe on my foot." "Mamma! 'please' did stay in my throat *so long*, that it felt big, and almost choked me. But it's out. I think it will come out *quick* next time."

Aug. 23.—Sect. V., Quest. XII.

Hedley Vicars.

When Hedley Vicars was a little boy he was self-willed, and greatly in danger of growing up so. He needed the grace of God. Once, when he was a lad, and was to return to school after the holidays, his mother told him to gather his books and other things together, and pack his box. Instead of doing as he was bid, he idled away his time, and at length placed some old boots, shells, stones, and such like in the box, and then said, "Mother, my box is packed." Hedley might call that fun; but it was very wrong, because it was disobedience to his mother, and gave her needless trouble. But, happily, when a young man, Hedley was truly converted. From that time he strove to live according to God's holy will. He was a Captain in the army, but he still led a holy life. One of his men said: "Since Mr. Vicars became so good, he has steadied about four hundred men in the regiment. I don't mean that he has made all the four hundred as good as himself; but he has sobered four hundred of the most drunken and wildest men in the regiment." Captain Vicars was slain in battle. But he had lived a Christian.

Aug. 30.—Sect. V., Quest. XIII.

The Little Dog's Face.

A lad had been told that it was his duty to obey God's laws, and honour and worship Him. The lad knew that this must be right. He sometimes endeavoured to do that which he could not but approve of. But he had not obtained the grace of God so abundantly as to make this obedience pleasant to him. Now, it so happened that the lad had a little dog of which he was very fond. They were often out together, and held many a consultation together, so far as the dog's abilities would permit. When barking did not convey all the dog wished to express, the wagging of his tail, and the expression of his countenance had to do their part. One day the boy said to a friend: "I wish I could mind what God says, as my dog minds what I say to him." "Why, surely, you can do that." "No, I can't. My dog always looks pleased to mind me, and what I say. I ought to be always pleased to mind God, and what He says to me; and I am not."

September 6.—Sect. V., Quest. XIV.

A Capital Trick.

Some youths were, one day, taking a walk. They were students, and were accompanied in their rambles by their tutor. One of the young men espied a coat and a pair of shoes near a hedge. These evidently belonged to a labouring man who was at work in a distant part of the field; and who was, perhaps, so poor as to prefer working with bare feet in order to save his shoes. The youth said to his comrades, "I'll tell you a capital trick. Let us hide the fellow's shoes. He will soon want to go home. We will watch him from behind the hedge. Won't he stare when he finds his shoes are gone?" This speech was overheard by the tutor. He said to them, "I think I can tell you a better trick than the one proposed." "What is that, Sir?" "Well, the man is very poor. You have plenty of pocket-money. Suppose you place a large silver coin in each shoe. Then we will stop, and secretly watch him. Will he

not be amazed when he thursts one bare foot into one shoe, and then the other foot into the other shoe?" So the young men did; and greatly enjoyed the poor man's surprise.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

August 9.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. IX.
(*Concluded.*)

God, the Father of all.

LEARN the verses which were left. We have considered the goodness and greatness of God as set before us when we are taught to address Him as our Heavenly Father. Let us now reflect on the universality of God's Fatherhood. We are not taught to say, when we use this model prayer, "My Father." but "Our Father." Happy is he who is aided by the Spirit of God to say, at other times, "My Father." But here we learn that God claims to be the Father of all. None are excluded by Him from a share of His parental regard.

All, whatever their nation, may claim God as their Father.—An inquirer after religious truth, in former days, was directed in a vision to send for the Apostle Peter. The inquirer was a military officer. What was his name? Cornelius sent to Joppa for Peter. The Apostle, meanwhile, had received instructions in a vision on this very subject. Can you describe the vision which Peter had? Can you explain the meaning of Peter's vision? (Acts x.)

All, whatever their condition, may claim God as their Father.—We read of one who, when he died, "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." What was this man's name? When alive in this world, had he much money? Where was Lazarus frequently laid during the days of his affliction? Why was he laid there? Was Lazarus allowed to claim God as his Father? (Luke xvi. 19—22.) Though poor, Lazarus was God's child.

All, whatever their age, may claim God as their Father.—Do you know the name of a preacher, mentioned in the New Testament, whose grandmother was a good woman, and his mother also? What was the name of Timothy's mother? His grandmother's name? Did Timothy begin to seek the Lord whilst yet young? (2 Tim. i. 5, 6.)

EXERCISES.—What nation used to be, in outward things, most highly favoured? Is there any nation God is unwilling to save? Is God more willing to save rich people than poor people? At what age does God begin to care for us?

Aug. 16.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. X.

The Name of God.

God ought to be glorified by us individually.—The Lord Jesus spake a parable concerning "a certain nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." (Luke xix. 12—27.) In those days it was not uncommon for a great man to go to Rome, hoping that he should there be made ruler of some province. But whom did Christ mean by the "certain nobleman?" Whom did He mean by the "servants?" The servants received a "pound" each, to employ for their lord. What good things have we received from God? How are we to use these?

God ought to be glorified by all mankind.—You are familiar with the parable of the Prodigal Son. When the ungrateful and foolish young man returned home, how did his father receive him? When did he first see the returning wanderer? What did he command his servants to do? Had the repentant prodigal a brother? Was his elder brother as glad to receive the unhappy wanderer as his father? Was he in any degree pleased? Ought he to have been pleased? (Luke xv. 11—32.) We should do our utmost to lead sinners to God; whether in this or in other lands.

God ought to be glorified in all things.—Who was the special forerunner of Christ? The preaching of John the Baptist attracted much attention. People of all ranks, and in great crowds, flocked to hear him. They were anxious to be baptized by him, and to be reckoned among his disciples. Many of the people thought that he must be the promised Messiah. They sought to do him honour, and were willing to do much that he told them. But when Jesus appeared, the Baptist directed the people to Him. He wished all to go to Jesus. (John i. 26, 27, 29, 36.)

EXERCISES.—To whom ought we to be obedient? In what Book is God's will revealed?

Do all the nations worship the true God? Do all people in this country serve God? Can we do anything to lead men to God? What can we do? Ought we always to be pleased if God is glorified?

Aug. 23.—Sect. VIII., Quest. XI.

The Kingdom of Grace.

Learn the reply, and the first of the appended verses. Let us then think how the Lord Jesus already reigns on this earth, making the world better, and extending His dominion from heart to heart, and from land to land.

The spirituality of Christ's kingdom.—When the Lord Jesus began to preach and perform miracles, most of the Jews were favourable to Him. They thought that He was about to become a mighty King, like David or Solomon; and that He would raise their nation to great wealth and power. They were impatient for Him to throw off the appearance of poverty. On one occasion, at least, they were resolved to compel Him to declare Himself at once. After a time they were perplexed. Some of the Pharisees at length demanded when the kingdom should appear. The fact was, that it had already been set up. Where did Jesus say it was? (Luke xvii. 21.)

The excellence of Christ's kingdom.—Those who obtained true religion were made richer than they would have been if a standard had been raised on Mount Zion, or Mount Gerizim, or Mount Tabor, and they had triumphed under that royal banner. Worldly Jews were eagerly expecting something of that sort, whilst penitent believers were receiving real and abiding wealth. The Lord Jesus compares true religion to something unexpectedly found in a field. What was that? (Matt. xiii. 44.) To something bought by a merchant? (Matt. xiii. 45.)

The extension of Christ's kingdom.—When Christ had called four fishermen to be His disciples, His Church was very small. The names of those four? Christ said that, although so little, it would become very large. What kind of seed did He compare His kingdom to? The mustard-plant became like a tree. What creatures sometimes formed homes therein? Do birds ever build their nests in lettuce-plants, or cabbages? They are not large enough. When leaven, or barm, is put into flour, does it extend? Can you hear any noise while it spreads? Yet it spreads. No one can get it out again. (Matt. xiii. 31—33.)

Exercises.—Has Christ any palace in this earth that we can see? Wherein does He reign? Does He greatly bless the souls in which He reigns? Which is the greatest treasure of all? Will Christ's kingdom extend to all lands?

Aug. 30.—Sect. VIII., Quest. XI.

(*Concluded.*)

The Kingdom of Glory.

Learn the rest of the appended verses. Then let us contemplate Christ's kingdom as it will for ever exist when His gracious purposes have been fully accomplished, and His saints have all been gathered around Him in heaven.

The greatness of heavenly bliss.—David wrote:—"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psalm xvi. 11.) David served God from early life, and the Lord gave him many comforts whilst on earth, but not "fulness of joy." There was always something wanting which would have been pleasant, or something allotted to him which was painful. When a lad, he had to bear hardships. Of what sort? When a young man, he had an envious and powerful enemy. Who was it? When king, he had a rebellious son. His name? When old he had suffering and feebleness. He must go to heaven to possess "fulness of joy."

The perpetuity of heavenly bliss.—We read, "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." (Daniel vii. 18.) During the lifetime of Daniel, (the prophet who wrote the words just read,) Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, was slain, and a Median prince took the kingdom. What was his name? But he only possessed it a short time. He was succeeded by a Persian prince, who had assisted in the conquest of Babylon. What was the name of Darius's successor? Cyrus had the kingdom for a much longer period than Darius. But he also died. Heavenly blessedness is not only complete, but endless.

The inheritors of heavenly bliss.—Only

the good will be allowed to enter heaven. In this world men may become very rich, or wealthy, or vigorous, or skilful; and may therefore be honoured by their fellows, without securing the grace of God. Indeed, it is possible that they may be members of the Christian Church, without being real disciples of Christ. The Saviour spake two parables on this subject. One was concerning tares and wheat in one field, and the other, about a net and fish. What do you remember of these parables? (Matt. xiii. 36—43, 47—50.)

EXERCISES.—Mention what things you regard as pleasant? Can any earthly things fully satisfy our souls? What is the longest period a man can possibly enjoy earthly good? What kind of people must we be to enter heaven?

September 6.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. XII.

The Will of God.

Knowledge of God's will.—The king of Judah, on a certain occasion, went to visit the king of Israel. The latter king was at that time arranging a warlike expedition in order to recover Ramoth-Gilead from the king of Syria, and requested the king of Judah to accompany and assist him. What were the names of these kings of Israel and Judah? (1 Kings xxii.) The king of Israel inquired of a great number of false prophets whether he should go against Ramoth-Gilead or not. They encouraged Ahab to do so. Because of the entreaty of Jehoshaphat he asked advice from a good man, a prophet of the Lord. Did Ahab really wish to know God's will? (1 Kings xxii. 8, 13, 18.)

Obedience to God's will.—When the Apostle Paul had been for some time engaged in preaching the Gospel in Asia Minor, he was thinking where he ought to go next. All that he wished to ascertain was, where God would have him labour. He had been proclaiming the glad tidings in Galatia, but he was directed by the Holy Ghost not to tarry in Asia Minor. He purposed to try what he could do for Christ in Bithynia, but was taught by the Spirit that he was not to go to that country. Paul only wished to know where the Lord would have him preach. Can you relate a vision which Paul had? (Acts xvi. 6—10.) So Paul came to Macedonia at once.

Submission to God's will.—We have an instance of this in one of the verses you have just learned. Some good people were unwilling that Paul should continue his journey to Jerusalem as he purposed doing. A prophet named Agabus "took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." (Acts xxi. 11.) The disciples were unwilling that Paul should thus suffer. What did they say when they perceived that God would have Paul go?

EXERCISES.—Do all people always wish to know God's will? ought we? Do all, who know God's will, do it? ought we? Do all patiently submit to God's will? ought we? By what means must we obtain strength of soul to do what we ought?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

The King and the Gipsy.

GEORGE III. was one day riding in Windsor Forest. He had become separated from the gentlemen with whom he had set out, and from his attendants. As he rode along, he observed a child weeping bitterly. The girl was ill-clad, and seemed to be in great distress. The good-natured monarch asked her the occasion of her trouble. She replied, that her mother was dying, and that she had been to Windsor to request a clergyman to come with her to advise her mother, and pray with her; but that she had not succeeded. The king told the little girl to show him the way to her mother. The child took him to a tent. Within that tent lay a middle-aged gipsy woman at the point of death. The king, without informing them who he was, began to speak to the dying woman of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. The poor sufferer was exceedingly feeble; but evidently listened with great eagerness. As the Royal Visiter explained how Jesus suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, and that He had said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," the dying woman's countenance brightened; the look of distressing anxiety upon it changed into a smile of peace, and then her spirit passed into the unseen world. The mighty King of England, and the poor gipsy woman, could only go for help to Him who is "the Father of the spirits of all flesh." (No. II. *August* 9.)

A Samoan God.

Some may be amused by the following heathen legend. But it will be far better to pity the poor idolaters who are so ignorant of the character of God, and who have not learned to hallow His name. They are taught, and believe, such stories as these:—"One day a god saw a woman drawing water at a small river. He asked her to give him a drink, but she would not. The god was very angry, and, instead of urging his request, he drank up all the river; and then walked away with it in his mouth. Everybody saw that he had something unusual in his mouth, and the people were all bent upon knowing what it was. The god walked along, and would neither speak nor open his mouth. At last, one rude fellow stole up behind him, and ventured to tickle him. This made the god titter; and, in consequence of his doing so, a quantity of the river spirted out of his mouth. Such a shower fell, as to form many large water-holes, which remain to this day. He then went over the sea to Apolima, and poured out the remainder of the river there. Thus a stream was formed which has not yet ceased to flow."

The Samoan children are taught to believe such nonsense as this, and know not how to revere the name of the one true God. Ought we not to be thankful for the Bible, and endeavour to send God's truth everywhere? (No. II. *August* 16.)

The Mutilated Hands.

Two heathen men had quarrelled. Bad tempers often lead people to do what they know to be unkind. But this is especially the case in lands where the Word of God is not known. One of these men saw his enemy's daughter, a little girl, alone in the forest. The cruel man seized her, and chopped some of her fingers off, and sent her home with this message: "I've had my revenge." Several years passed away. The cruel man was now old, and feeble, and miserably poor. He had to wander from place to place, and was in danger of famishing. He came to a dwelling where was the appearance of plenty. The miserable man went to the door, and begged for something to eat. The mistress did not reach him anything herself; but she directed that plenty of good food and nice milk should be placed before him, and spoke kindly to him. When he had enjoyed himself greatly, and was refreshed, the mistress took her hands from beneath her apron, and held them before the man. Some fingers were missing. He at once perceived that he was indebted to her whom he had so barbarously mutilated. She said, "Now, I've had my revenge." The little girl had become a Christian. God had cared for her, and blessed her with prosperity. Because she was in the kingdom of grace, she was disposed to show kindness to the man who had treated her so cruelly. (No. II. *August* 23.)

Waiting near the Gate.

One Sabbath evening, a little girl who loved Jesus was dying. The Minister who had been chiefly instrumental in leading her to Christ went to see her. The dying child expressed the pleasure she felt in seeing him once more; and then said, "I shall soon have done with my pain. They have told me that you were preaching this forenoon about the glories of heaven. I should have enjoyed listening to you. But I shall soon be in heaven, and amid the glory. First of all, when I get there, I shall go straight to Jesus, and kneel before His feet, and bless Him for His wonderful mercy in dying for a poor sinner such as I have been. Then I will ask His leave, and go back to the gate, and stand close to it, so as to see the saints as they come in; and I will there watch for your coming. I will wait, and wait, and wait until you do come; and, then, I will go with you, and say to the Lord Jesus, 'This is the man who led me to Thy feet on earth.' I should have been glad this morning to have heard you preach about heaven. But I shall soon be there." (No. II. *August* 30.)

Rev. Theophilus Pearson.

Only one month had been spent in the Hull West Circuit. When, in 1861, Mr. Pearson arrived in Hull, his friends thought that he was just entering on higher service, and more extensive usefulness than ever. Many had been impressed with the rapid ripening of graces which had taken place in their beloved friend. Mr. Pearson was himself more than ever desirous of doing good. He had a much-loved wife and children, to whom he seemed necessary. It was not, therefore, strange or undesirable that he should expect to stay a little longer here, and should wish to do so. But, when assailed by violent pain, he was sustained by grace; and from the moment that he learned that his end was nigh, his peace was undisturbed. He calmly and gratefully resigned himself to the will of God. What was arranged by his Lord must be right. So the faithful Minister passed to his reward. Some of his latest and most earnest supplications

were for his children; his prayers being in the Psalmist's words: "O satisfy them early with Thy mercy, that they may rejoice and be glad all their days," repeating the words, "Satisfy them early! satisfy them early!" (No. II. *September* 6.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

August 9.—Deliverance from Danger.

Exod. xv. 10: "Thou didst blow with Thy wind."

1. *A new danger.*—When the Israelites left Egypt, it seemed as though all their troubles were over. They set out on their long and strange journey with their wives and little ones; a very great multitude. To guide them, God told Moses which way to take, and set a pillar of a cloud to go before them. Soon they came to the shore of the Red Sea, and rested there. But now Pharaoh was vexed that he had let them go from serving him, and resolved to follow them, and bring them back. How foolish this was, as well as sinful. His heart was yet hard and full of pride. So he made ready his chariots, and led on his army, and overtook the Israelites as they were by the sea. When they saw the Egyptians, they were sore afraid. They could not flee from them: there were high mountains on the one hand, and the great sea before them; and they "cried out unto the Lord." The path of duty sometimes leads to trial. But "God is a very present help in trouble."

2. *The way of escape.*—The night was full of terror to the people of Israel; they feared that in the morning Pharaoh and his host would be upon them, and that they must perish, or be driven back again to their hard and terrible life in Egypt. But God told Moses to stretch his hand out over the sea, and He would make "a way for their escape." "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Is any trial so great that He cannot deliver from it? "The pillar of the cloud" went from before the people, and stood between the Egyptians and them; and "it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light to these." Then "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea," and God sent "a strong east wind all that night," which swept back the waters, and made a dry path through the sea; so they passed safely over,—men, women, little children, and cattle; not one was lost, for "the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left."

3. *The end of pride.*—In the morning Pharaoh saw that they had escaped, and went after them by the path through the sea. But his pride and sin were now to end. God told Moses again to stretch "his hand over the sea," and "the sea returned to his strength." The Egyptians fled in terror, but it was too late; for the sea "covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh." So that there was not left "so much as one of them." It is yet true, that "sin shall not go unpunished." "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day." And, when they saw the great work He did, "they feared the Lord, and believed the Lord," and sang a song of triumph and of praise for His wonderful mercy.

Revision.—Why did Pharaoh go after the people? Where did he overtake them? What did they do? How did God save them? How did He punish Pharaoh? Why did He do this? What lessons does this history teach us?

Aug. 16.—How to treat Evil.

Rom. xii. 9: "Abhor that which is evil."

1. *Of evil.*—What is *evil?* It is another name for *sin;* anything *wrong.* There are evil thoughts, and evil words, and evil ways. How may we know what *is* wrong? What does our Catechism say sin is? There are three great lights to guide all to this knowledge. (1.) *Our conscience.* God has placed this as a voice within us, which, though silent, speaks aloud in telling right from wrong, and in warning against sin. It is this which makes even a little child afraid and ashamed of doing wrong? this, too, makes him feel pleasure when doing *right.* Have you never heard this voice when about to do wrong? (2.) *The Word of God.* What is that? Here is one of its warnings. It is full of such. (3.) *The teaching of wise and kind friends.* Parents, teachers, and Ministers, by the words they speak, by the acts of their lives,

and the books they give, all join to teach about evil, and the way to shun it. More than this, the Holy Spirit of God kindly and graciously uses all these means to help and to guide you.

2. *How to treat evil.—Abhor it.* This is a little word with a great meaning. It is to fear and to hate a thing with all the heart. When God changed the pleasant waters of the Nile into blood, the Egyptians turned from it with loathing; they could not drink of it; they *abhorred* the blood. When the fiery serpents were sent among the Israelites, for their sin, they *abhorred* them for the pain and death they wrought. When the people saw the fearful pain and misery which were wrought by the evil spirits whom the Lord Jesus cast out from them that were possessed, they *abhorred* them. And this is how we should feel towards *sin*. Do sinful thoughts come into your mind? thoughts of deceit, or disobedience, or ill temper? Do evil words enter your ear from the mouth of the wicked? Loathe them, and cast them off, and flee from them as "from the face of a serpent." "Abhor" them, for they are evil. "Cleave" only "to that which is good."

Revision.—What is meant by "evil?" How may we know that which is evil? What has God given to guide us in the doing? What is our conscience? What is it to "abhor evil?" How should we abhor it? why?

Aug. 23.—Bread from Heaven.

Exod. xvi. 4: "I will rain bread from heaven."

1. *More trials.*—As soon as the Israelites were delivered at the Red Sea, a new trial awaited them. "They went three days in the wilderness, and found no water!" We cannot tell how great a distress this was in that hot and parched land. At last water was found, but they could not drink it, for it was bitter. Yet, when Moses "cried unto the Lord," He quickly took away their trouble. He showed Moses a tree, which he was to "cast into the waters." When he had done so, they were at once made sweet; and joy and life spread again among the people. Surely this should have led them to trust cheerfully in God for everything. But, instead of this, they "murmured against the Lord," because they had not flesh and bread, as in Egypt. How soon they forgot the misery they suffered there, and the wonderful power and kindness by which God had delivered them.

2. *The manna.*—God, though angry at their murmurings, was full of mercy towards them; and He said, "I will rain bread from heaven." But why was this needed? Could they not sow corn, and let it grow and ripen, and from it make bread? No! the land in which they journeyed was not fit for this, nor did they stay long enough in one place to do it. So God took this wonderful way to supply their wants. In the morning, when the sun rose, and the dew had "gone up," there lay upon the ground "a small round thing," "small as the hoar-frost." What was this; and where did it come from? The children of Israel did not know, till Moses said, "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." It was a gift of God, pleasant to the taste, and good for food. This, too, they had every day for forty years in the wilderness, until they came to a land where they could grow corn as aforetime.

3. *God's providence and grace.*—Is not this very like the way in which God feeds and sustains us all, day by day? From whose earth does our food grow? Whose rain waters it? Whose sun ripens it, as it grows up day by day? "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." No man could make a single grain of corn, or any fruit of the earth grow. It is given by God alone. He gives *bread for the soul*, too. It is "the bread of life," which cometh down from heaven. Without it we must perish for ever. What is that bread? Where may the hungry soul find that food?

Revision.—What new trials have we heard of? How were the people saved from the first? How from the second? What was manna? Where did it come from? What other food may it remind us of? How may we get the "bread of life?"

Aug. 30.—Cruelty to Jesus.

Mark xv. 17: "They platted a crown of thorns."

1. *Jesus in the hands of His enemies.*—When the Lord Jesus lived upon earth, many wicked men hated Him for His wise and kind words, and for the good that He did. They were long anxious

to have Him in their power; and, at last, Judas came with a great multitude of evil men, and took Him from the midst of His disciples, and led Him away to His enemies. They gladly sought how they might put Him to death. But, had He done any wrong? No: "for in Him was no sin." Yet, with cruel words, they spake falsely against Him, and said that He, who was the Prince of Life, was "worthy of death." Then some spat on Him, others smote Him; and, when the morning came, they bound Him, and led Him away to Pilate, the governor, to ask that He might be put to death. Pilate knew that it was in envy and in malice they thus dealt with Him, and he wished to save Him. But the priests and the scribes stirred up the people against Him, and they showed their rage, and with fierce words cried out, "Crucify Him." So Pilate, to content these wicked men, gave Him up to be crucified.

2. *Jesus crucified.*—After the Roman soldiers had scourged Him, they took Him, in scorn and mockery, and "clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His head." This was their cruel way of mocking Him as the "King of the Jews." Then they led Him away to be crucified, and nailed to the cross Him whose whole life had been spent in spreading gladness and blessing on all around. Thus Jesus, the Lord of Glory, died by the hands of wicked men. But could not He have saved Himself from their malice? Yes; for He was the Son of God, and had all power. Why, then, did He thus suffer and die? For our sakes He bore this sorrow, and death itself. He knew our sin; and, therefore, bore our punishment for us, that we might have a way of escape from God's anger. And there is no other way by which we can be saved, but by trusting in Him "who loved us, and gave Himself for us." Is there anything we can do in return for this great love of our Saviour? Yes. All He requires is, that we should love Him with all our heart, and give ourselves to His service for ever.

REVISION.—Why was Jesus hated by His enemies? Who delivered Him up into their power? What did His enemies do with Him? How did they put Him to death? Why did He die? What does He require in return for His love towards us?

DAY-SCHOOL AFFAIRS AND WORK.

DISCIPLINE.

I. WHAT IT IS.

1. Discipline is the moral power exercised by the teacher over the moral nature of the children, by which their character is moulded; self-respect and a sense of responsibility springing out of that habit of exact and immediate obedience, which is the first duty of the child.

Discipline includes that subtile power of influence which does not admit of definition, and is real just in proportion to the degree in which the teacher can influence a child's motives for good.

2. Discipline must be carefully distinguished from drill. There may be perfect drill—that is, an exact performance of certain mechanical movements—without discipline.

Good discipline in a school will naturally include good drill, because it implies order, and order cannot be secured without rules. A good disciplinarian values drill, because it assists in forming those habits of exactness and immediate obedience which are so valuable for their own sake.

But discipline cannot exist unless there is a real sympathy between the teacher and the pupil.

II. ON WHAT DISCIPLINE DEPENDS.

1. *Natural Disposition.*—The power of exercising discipline depends to a considerable extent upon natural disposition. A genial temper, energy, and quiet firmness, quickness of eye, with power of moral influence, are the chief essentials of good discipline; and these, of course, are found in very different degrees in different persons.

But as natural gifts are useless without earnestness of purpose, so that very earnestness often appears to supply the want of natural powers, by enabling persons to turn to the fullest account every gift which they do possess. Moral influence cannot exist without earnestness of purpose.

2. *Special Training.*—Setting aside a few exceptional cases, the power of securing good discipline in a school depends upon the care taken to train persons for the special work of teaching. The object of training is not only to make teachers familiar with the organization and instruction of a school, but also to secure that earnestness of purpose which ensures the fullest employment, both of natural gifts and of acquired knowledge and skill.

Teaching must be learnt like any other art; and it would be as reasonable to suppose that a person could be a skilled carpenter or mason without having learnt his trade, as to think that a teacher's work can be done without special preparation.

III. Indications of Good Discipline.

Good discipline will be seen—

1. In the absence of noise.

2. In the prompt and cheerful obedience of the children to all signals of command.

3. In the quickness and quietness of the changes of lessons.

4. In the smartness of the collective movements in drilling and marching.

5. In the power of the teacher to secure exact obedience to all commands without apparent effort.

6. In the activity of the children in their work.

7. In the honesty of the school; especially as it is proved by the absence of copying.

8. In the manner, cheerfulness, and general bearing of the children.

9. In the power of the pupil-teachers to keep order in their classes.—*Menet's "Practical Hints."*

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

67. Psalm cv. 37, tells us that when Israel left Egypt, "there was not one feeble person among" them.

68. The sin of Oreb and Zeeb is mentioned in Psalm lxxxiii. 11.

69. The first account of a man being sold for a slave is given in Gen. xxxvii. 28.

70. Potiphar gave Joseph charge of the butler and the baker. (Gen. xl. 4.)

71. John saw the visions written in the Book of Revelation when in the Isle of Patmos. (Rev. i. 9.)

72. We find a reference to the sin of Balaam in Jude 11.

W.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

JAMES BARTLE.

James Bartle was brought to God in connexion with a series of special services held at Denholme, in the Bingley Circuit, in the winter of 1866-67. From a very early age he had regularly attended the Sabbath-school; and before he was seven years old, had passed from the alphabet-class, through the intervening stages, to the Bible-class. He was more than ordinarily attentive to the instructions of his teachers; and his mind became richly stored with Scriptural truth. His thoughtfulness was often indicated by the curious

questions he would ask his father respecting God and eternity. In his tenth year he commenced working in a coal mine; and, although associated with youths who were flagrantly wicked, he was kept from profanity and other sins.

In the beginning of the year 1866, a branch of the Juvenile Home and Foreign Missionary Association was formed at Denholme, and he became one of the earliest and most successful collectors.

The special services before mentioned were continued for nine weeks, and he was present at every service. Upwards of seventy persons, of different ages, received spiritual good, and became members of our Society; and among them was the subject of this sketch. While kneeling with other penitents, in the vestry of the chapel, he obtained the mercy he sought,—the forgiveness of all his sins; and went home rejoicing in the God of his salvation. From that time, he never doubted his acceptance with God.

The affliction which ended in his death was severe, and continued for four weeks On his parents or friends inquiring the state of his mind, his uniform reply was, "I am on the Rock,—fixed on Jesus;" and when asked if he should like to recover, he promptly said, "Just as the Lord wills." In consequence of his affliction, he was only able to attend his class five times. His "note on trial" being brought to him in his sick room, he took it in his hand, read its contents, and smiled with delight. A day or two before his death, he was heard to pray for his Leader, and the members of the class by name, as far as his strength would allow. He was often heard to repeat the lines,—

"My Jesus to know, and feel His blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below."

During the night-watches, such utterances as the following were heard from his lips: "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." "Praise the Lord!" "Praise the Lord!" On the morning of his death, he expressed to his mother his desire to depart; but "as the Lord wills," he added. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." He thus passed away, on the 3d of April, 1867, at the age of sixteen, to "the realms of the blest," where—

"No sorrow can breathe in the air;
No gloom of affliction or sin,
No shadow of evil is there."

Bingley. W. L.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

A Young Lady's Reasons for not Dancing.

1. Dancing would lead me into crowded rooms and late hours, which are injurious to health and usefulness.
2. Dancing would lead me into close contact with very promiscuous company; and "evil communications corrupt good manners."
3. Dancing would require me to use and permit such freedom with the other sex as I believe to be wrong.
4. My parents and friends would be anxious about me, if I were out late, keeping company with they know not whom.
5. Ministers and good people in general disapprove of dancing, and I think it is not safe to set myself against them; if a thing be even doubtful, I wish to be on the safe side.
6. Dancing has a bad name, and I mean to study things that are pure, lovely, and of good report.
7. I am told dancing is a great temptation to young men, and I do not wish to have anything to do with leading them astray.
8. Dancing unfits the mind for serious reflection and prayer, and I mean to do nothing that will estrange me from my God and Saviour.
9. There are many graceful exercises and cheerful amusements, which have none of the objections connected with them that lie against dancing.

Found at Last.

Some important discoveries of Roman remains were made at Lydney, in Gloucestershire, not long ago, and involved a very curious incident. Among the remains of a temple dedicated to the god Noden, found there, was a brass-plate on which was an inscription offering a reward for a ring, and stating that, in the event of its being found, some portion of the money would

be dedicated to the god Noden; but that, if any person who found it failed to restore it to the owner, the curse of Noden would be upon him. Most singular to say, a ring corresponding with the lost one, and bearing the name of the person offering the reward, has been found at Silchester.—*Builder.*

Kind Words.

KIND words do not cost much. They never blister the tongue or lips; and we have never heard of any mental trouble arising from this quarter. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much. (1st.) They help one's own good nature and goodwill. Soft words soften our own soul. Angry words are fuel to the flame of wrath, and make it blaze the more fiercely. (2d.) Kind words make other people good-natured. Cold words freeze people, but hot words scorch them, and sarcastic words irritate them, and bitter words make them bitter, and wrathful words make them wrathful.

The Right Persuasion.

IN terrible agony, a soldier lay dying in the hospital. A visiter asked him, "What Church are you of?" "Of the Church of Christ," he replied. "I mean, of what persuasion are you?" then inquired the visiter. "Persuasion!" said the dying man, as his eyes looked heavenward; "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord."

"I know the Way to Heaven."

THESE words were spoken by little Minnie to little Johnny, who stood by her side, looking on a picture-book that Minnie had in her hand.

"You do?" said Johnny. "Well, won't you tell me how to get there?"

"O, yes! I'll tell you. Just commence going up, and keep on going up all the time, and you'll get there. But, Johnny, you must not turn back."

"Well," said Johnny, "I won't."

They both had been looking at a picture of our Saviour's head pressed with thorns, and the blood trickling down His face. This excited Minnie's sympathies, and she said aloud to herself, "My Mamma has been teaching me the way to heaven for a long time; and now I know the way so well, I can go myself."

Little Minnie is only three years old. How many grown folks are there that can say they know the way to heaven, and can go by themselves?

Yes, Minnie has told you all the way,—"keep going up;" for the way to heaven leads upward, whilst the downward way is toward ruin.

Making up a Quarrel.

IN the making up of a quarrel between man and man, the difficulty lies not so much in arousing the desire for reconciliation, as in persuading either party to make the first advance towards it. "I am the injured man, I am the one whose pardon should be sought; let my adversary humble himself, and I may act with generosity." Such is the position assumed by *each* party; and thus, in proud unwillingness to come forward, and hold out the hand of fellowship, each stands aloof, and hatred spreads and grows.

The Sunday-school Teacher's Prayer.

FATHER, look upon us,
On this Sabbath-day:
Gather'd at Thy sacred feet,
Pastor, teachers, children meet;
Bless us now, we pray.

Saviour, with Thy fulness
Fill each teacher's heart;
So that, full, it may o'erflow
On the little ones below,
And Thy truth impart.

Spirit, with Thy quickening,
Touch each childish breast,
That the themes which angels choose,
And the words archangels use,
Ever there may rest.

In the early morning—
Morning fresh and cool—
Hear our hymn of prayer ascend;
Hear us when in prayer we bend,
Pleading for our school.

Let it be a sheepfold,
Guarded well from harm;
Where the tender lambs are fed,
And in greenest pastures led,
'Neath the Shepherd's arm.

Let it be a garden
From the waste restored;
Spot amid that waste, so fair,
That the angels hover there,—
Garden of the Lord.

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

AUGUST 2.—Morning Lesson.

PREPARATION.—Mark xiv. 1—16.

Summary.—The Passover being near, the chief Jews and Judas conspire against Jesus to put Him to death. A woman enters the house of Simon, and anoints the head of Jesus with costly ointment, at which some murmur; but Jesus, approving what the woman had done, rebukes them, and declares that this kindly act shall be published wherever the Gospel is preached. Two of the disciples inquiring about the Passover, He sends them into the city to make it ready.

I. Preparation by the Jews, and Judas.—V. 1, 2; 10, 11. *Two days*,—according to the Jewish mode of speaking: "on the following day," according to ours. *Passover*,—kept in memory of the deliverance of Israel, when all the firstborn of Egypt were slain, Exod. xii. 12, 13. *Unleavened bread*,—because no bread leavened with barm or yeast was allowed to be used during this feast, Exod. xii. 8, 15, 18—20, 34. *And*,—at the same time the Jews were plotting His death, Matt. xxvi. 3. *By craft*,—"by some secret plan that would secure possession of Him without exciting the opposition of the people." V. 2. *Not*—during the feast, which lasted seven days. *An uproar*,—a violent attempt to rescue Christ, who had the sympathy of large numbers of the people; Jerusalem was very crowded at this festival. V. 10. *Iscariot*.—Probably he was "a man of Kerioth," born there, and so named after his birthplace, Josh. xv. 25. *Went*,—immediately after the reproof given, v. 6—9; for this was directed chiefly against Judas, John xii. 4—6. *To betray*,—in that sly, deceitful manner they desired, v. 1. *Were glad*,—that they had found a man so likely to help them. *Promised*,—in answer to his request, Matt. xxvi. 15. *Conveniently*,—without provoking the opposition of the people, Luke xxii. 6.

II. Preparation by the Anointing of the Woman.—V. 3—9. *The leper*,—a surname, probably, given to him because he had been cured of leprosy by Christ. *A woman*,—Mary, the sister of Lazarus, John xii. 3. *Alabaster box*, &c.—See Illustration. *On His head*,—and His feet, John xii. 3. V. 4. *Indignation within*,—surprise that Jesus should suffer it, and anger at Mary for doing it. *And said*,—probably to the woman. V. 5. *Three hundred pence*.—About nine pounds of our money; so it was *very precious*, or costly. *Given to the poor*,—this was sincerely meant by some, but not by Judas. *Murmured*,—as though she had really wasted or thrown it away. V. 6. *A good work*,—out of pure, fervent love, and deepest respect for Me. V. 7. *Whensoever ye will*,—if the concern you now manifest be real, the poor will not suffer. *Not always*,—a warning that He was about to leave them; made very impressive by v. 8. *To anoint*.—It was an ancient custom to anoint victims for sacrifice, and also the dead, 2 Chron. xvi. 14; ch. xvi. 1. V. 9. *This Gospel*,—this history of My life, and the doctrines I have taught. *A memorial*,—as an honourable instance of her devout attachment to Me.

III. Preparation for the Symbolical Passover.—V. 12—16. *The first day*,—in the morning of it. *Passover*,—the Paschal lamb, Exod. xii. 3—5. *Where*.—They had no doubt Jesus would keep the feast. V. 13. *The city*,—Jerusalem. *A man*, &c.—No one but Christ could have foreknown this. V. 14. *The goodman*,—the master of him whom you follow. *The Master saith*,—signifying that the man would know who was meant. *Guest-chamber where*, &c.—The one which I choose out of all those open to Me. V. 15. *Large upper room*,—the one "devoted to purposes of prayer, repose, and [often] eating." *Furnished*, &c.—literally, spread and ready. V. 16. *Found as He had said*.—Another evidence that He foreknew what would happen. *They made ready*,—purchasing a lamb approved by the

priests, killing it, and providing the bitter herbs, &c., to be eaten with it.

Reflections. — 1. *Wicked men often help each other to do mischief.*—The Jews wanted such a man as Judas, and he was prepared to do what they wished.

2. *God overrules the wickedness of man for the accomplishment of His own word.*—The Jews did not wish to take Jesus during the feast, yet they did so; and thus the death of Christ was publicly and widely known.

3. *Evil desires and passions, such as avarice and anger, are as powder to the fiery darts of the wicked one.*—Beware of them.

4. *Men are often angry with others when they should weep for themselves.*

5. *Any act which proves our love to Jesus is precious in His sight.*

6. *A good deed shines a long time in the world.*—"Let your light shine."

7. "*Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us.*"—While the disciples were preparing the typical sacrifice, He was preparing the true One, Matt. xxvi. 18.

Questions.—Why was the feast of the Passover kept? Why with "unleavened bread?" How did the Jews wish to take Jesus? Why? What happened at Bethany just then? Who was the woman? What was the ointment worth? Why did the disciples murmur? How did Jesus reprove them? What did Judas do then? What did the Jews promise him? Where did Jesus send two of His disciples? What for? Did they find as He had said? What did they do?

Illustration.—"an alabaster box of..spikenard."

See v. 3. *Alabaster* is a species of onyx, or marble," distinguished for being light, and of a beautiful colour, almost transparent." *Spikenard* is a plant of Arabia and the far East, with a small, slender stalk, and a heavy, thick root. "*She brake the box*," that is, the seal by which the mouth was stopped. "It is the custom in Eastern countries still, to stop the bottles which contain essences with cotton, and to seal them with wax; in which form that costly perfume, the attar of roses, is still imported into this country."

AUGUST 2.—Afternoon Lesson.

PURSUIT AND DELIVERANCE.—Exodus xiv.

For repetition, verses 30, 31.

Summary.—God commands Moses to lead the children of Israel into a situation of difficulty, telling him how this will induce Pharaoh to follow them. Pharaoh makes great preparation, and pursues the Israelites, who are sorely terrified. Moses teaches them to look for the salvation of the Lord; he lifts up his rod, God divides the sea, the pillar of cloud goes behind them, and so is between them and the Egyptians, and the people pass through. Pharaoh and his host follow, but the Lord causes the waters to return, overflow, and drown them.

I. Encamping.—V. 1—4. *Pi-hahiroth*,—"probably the name of a natural locality." *Migdol*.—"A military watch-tower." *Over against*,—in the face of. *Baal-zephon*,—"perhaps a well-known place," as the name signifies "sacred to Typhon," or "lord of the north." *Encamp*.—This was their third encampment after leaving Egypt, Num. xxxiii. 5—7. V. 3. *Entangled*, &c.—"This turn in their route was a very foolish way, according to human judgment:" they were literally hemmed in on all sides, but God purposely sent them to the place. V. 4. *I will harden*,—for the last time. *Honoured*,—by the destruction of those who have so stoutly fought against Me. *Egyptians may know*,—those left in the land. *They*,—the Israelites, obeyed God.

II. Pharaoh in Pursuit.—V. 5—9. *It was told*,—perhaps by some of the mixed multitude, who turned back; or more likely by spies sent out from Pharaoh. *Turned against the people*, &c.—They no sooner recovered from the panic caused by the death of the firstborn, than they saw the greatness of their loss: the service of the Israelites could not be easily replaced. V. 6. *Made ready his chariot*,—had the horses yoked to it. *His people*,—men of war. V. 7. *Chosen chariots*,—always in readiness for use. *And all*,—as many more as could be prepared in a very short time. *Captains*.—A troop of horsemen, "royal guards," accompanied each chariot. V. 8. *And he pursued*,—deaf to all the warnings taught him by the plagues. *And*,—although they *went out with a*

high hand,—by the display of Jehovah's glorious strength. V. 9. "War-chariots and cavalry were always the leading force of the Egyptians." *Overtook them*, —as such a force would be sure to do.

III. Terror and Trust.—V. 10—14. *Sore afraid*,—forgetful of what God had done for them. *Cried out*, &c.—But it was the cry of fear and despair, not of faith. V. 11. *No graves*, &c.,—a sarcastical expression of their rage against Moses. V. 12. *That we did tell thee.*—Ch. v. 21; vi. 9. V. 13. *Moses said.*—He meets their anger by calmly expressing his own strong confidence in God. *Stand still.*—Be quiet and passive, seeing you cannot help yourselves. *Which He will show*,—as in times past, and as He has promised to me now. *No more for ever*,—as you see them now, but v. 30. V. 14. *Hold your peace*,—"Keep quiet, and not complain any more" when the Lord has delivered you.

IV. God's Answer to Moses.—V. 15—18. *Wherefore*, &c.—Moses had been pleading with God, now God bids him be resolute in action. *Go forward*,—towards the sea. *Thy rod*,—the very sight of which would call to mind the wonders of Egypt. V. 16. *Stretch out*, &c.—Another act, calling to remembrance the same wonders. *Divide*,—command that it be divided, and I will do it, v. 21. V. 17, 18 repeat the promise of v. 3, 4.

V. Deliverance through the Sea. —V. 19—22. V. 19. See ch. iv. 21, 22. *The Angel*,—who was the Lord Himself, ch. iv. 21. V. 20. *Darkness*,—to the Egyptians. *Light*,—to the Israelites. What a signal display of Divine wisdom! V. 21. *A strong east wind*,—would blow right across the sea, and so literally divide the water, sending it in opposite directions north and south, making it a *wall* on either hand, as v. 22. No extraordinary wind acting on the natural ebb of the sea could have produced this effect.

VI. Destruction in the Sea.—V. 23—31. *Went in after them*,—blind to the fact that they were entering the sea, or made reckless by their rage against Israel. *The morning*,—fourth *watch*, just before the sunrising, Matt. xiv. 25. *The Lord looked..and troubled*, &c.—Another miraculous display of Divine power! V. 25. *Took off*, &c., how we are not told, but He did it! *Drave*, &c.—See Margin. *Let us flee*, &c.—Now they awake to their danger, but it is too late. V. 27. *The sea returned*, —showing that it was specially at the command of God that it so moved. *Against it*,—fighting to escape. V. 28. *Not so much as one*,—of those who went into the sea. V. 30. *Thus the Lord*, &c.—Who that believes the narrative can doubt this! *Dead*,—proving to Israel how determined the Egyptians were, and how the Almighty had saved them. V. 31. *Feared..and believed*, &c. —A natural and proper consequence.

Reflections.—1. *It is one of the designs of Providence to teach us that our help is only in the Lord.*—See v. 2—4.

2. *Wicked men may be terrified by some dreadful event; but, when they recover from the shock, their wickedness will not depart from them*, v. 5.

3. *Men easily forget past proofs of God's love and strength*, v. 10; *but the memory of past mercies should inspire confidence*, v. 16.

4. *It is difficult to remain passive under distressing circumstances.*—Yet it is our wisdom, for "salvation is of the Lord;" and when we cannot possibly help ourselves, God can help us.

5. *Faith in the Almighty power of God is better than attempting to explain His miracles.*

6. *When God signally blesses us, it ought to deepen our reverence, and strengthen our faith.*

Questions.—Where was Moses to take Israel? why? What did God seek by this? What did Pharaoh say? What did he do? How did the sight of Pharaoh's host affect the Israelites? What did they say to Moses? What reply did he make? What did God command? What became of the "pillar of cloud?" why? How was the sea divided? What happened to Pharaoh and his army? Were any of them left? Who saved Israel? What effect did it produce upon them?

Illustration.—WAR-CHARIOTS.

See v. 7. "According to the most authentic accounts we have of *war-chariots*, they were frequently drawn by *two* or by *four* horses, and carried *three* persons: one was charioteer, whose business it was to guide the horses, but he seldom fought; the second chiefly defended the charioteer; and the third alone was properly the combatant."—*A. Clarke.*

AUGUST 9.—Morning Lesson.

THE TRIUMPHANT SONG.—Exodus xv. 1—21.

Summary.—Their miraculous deliverance, and the signal destruction of their late tyrants, inspire Moses and the people to sing a hymn of praise to God; which is partly in celebration of the victory over Pharaoh, and partly prophetic of the downfall of their enemies.

I. The Song of Praise.—V. 1—13. *This song*,—"the most ancient of which there is any memory." *Triumphed gloriously*,—"in a most illustrious manner shown His power." V. 2. *An habitation*,—a place for His service and worship; I will "glorify Him." (Sept.) *My father's God*,—a thankful confession of the truth of ch. iii. 6, 15. *A Man of war*,—"the Hero of the battle." *The Lord*,—Jehovah, ch. iii. 14. V. 4. *His host*,—"military force." *His chosen*,—the pick and pride of his army. V. 5. *As a stone*,—that in which they trusted, helping to sink them, ch. xiv. 25. V. 6. *Thy right hand*,—omnipotence. *Hath dashed*,—it shatters and utterly destroys every foe. V. 7. "In the fulness of Thy Majesty Thou pullest down opponents," as a building is taken to pieces. *Consumed*,—as by fire, alluding to "the pillar of fire" out of which God looked, ch. xiv. 24. V. 8. *The blast*, &c.—The strong east wind poetically described, Ps. xviii. 15; Isai. lxiii. 11—14. *Were congealed*,—"A poetical description of the piling up of the waves like solid masses." V. 9. *Said*,—full of vain confidence, and breathing vengeance, Judges v. 30. *My lust*,—revenge shall "cool itself upon them." V. 10 repeats v. 5. V. 11. *The gods*, (Margin, "mighty ones,")—or those supposed to be gods by the Egyptians. *Glorious*,—glorified in the most sublime perfection of Thy nature by the *wonders* wrought in Egypt, and at the Red Sea. *Fearful*, &c.,—i. e., to be praised with the greatest fear and reverence. V. 12. *The earth swallowed*,—they were buried in the sand, or mud, at the bottom of the sea. V. 13. *Redeemed*,—from the bondage of Egypt. *Hast guided*,—towards the Holy Land, which Thou hast promised to them," v. 17.

II. The Song of Prophecy.—V. 14—19. *Palestina*,—Philistia, "the Philistines being the most valiant people in that country to which the Israelites were to go, and therefore here mentioned." V. 15. *Edom*,—descendants of Esau, Gen. xxxvi. 15—18. *Moab*,—See Num. xxii. 3. *Canaan*,—Josh. v. 1. V. 16. *Still*,—dumb and motionless as stones, having no power or heart to resist the passage of the Israelites. V. 17. *The mountain*, &c.—Meaning, perhaps, Canaan generally, which was a very mountainous country; but certainly referring to Mount Sion, as His peculiar dwelling-place, Ps. lxxviii. 54; lxviii. 16; cxxxii. 13, 14. V. 18. *For ever and ever*,—because no earthly power can possibly withstand His arm. V. 19 repeats the sentiment of v. 1, 4, 5, 10, 12, which, indeed, is the subject of the song.

III. Miriam.—V. 20, 21. *Prophetess*,—"because she had a gift of composing hymns in praise of the Divine Majesty;" also Num. xii. 2. *Of Aaron*,—and Moses also, whom she watched as a babe in the ark of bulrushes, ch. ii. 4. V. 20. *Timbrel*,—called by us a "tambourine." *All the women*, &c.—In this way victories were celebrated many years afterwards, Judges v.; 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. *Miriam answered*,—Moses, and the men who sang with him, in triumphant chorus replying to all they said of the glorious strength of God.

Reflections.—1. *National deliverances should be the subject, and should inspire the song, of national praise to God.*—His hand may not be so visible, but it is as really there as in this instance.

2. *The more we see of God's wondrous works, the more should we adore the perfections of His name.*

3. *His mighty doings in the past are the pledge to us that He will maintain His supremacy for ever, and make all His enemies to "lick the dust."*—See Isai. li. 9—15.

Questions.—How old is this song? Who sings it? To whom is it sung? On what occasion? What does it say of the Lord? v. 1. What was He to them? v. 2. How does it say Pharaoh was destroyed? v. 5, 10. What did the enemy intend to do? v. 9. How is God praised in v. 11? What is said about Edom, Philistia, and Canaan? Where would God bring His people to dwell? What was Miriam? What did she do?

Illustration.—FRUITS OF VICTORY.

"On the next day, Moses gathered together the weapons of the Egyptians, which were brought to the camp of the Hebrews by the current of the sea, and the force of the winds assisting it; and he conjectured that this also happened by Divine Providence, that so they might not be destitute of weapons."—*Josephus.*

AUGUST 9.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

SOLEMNITY AND SORROW.—Mark xiv. 17—42.

For repetition, verses 22—24.

SUMMARY.—At the supper of the Passover, Jesus foretells the treachery of one of His disciples, to their surprise and sorrow. He institutes the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; after which they go to the Mount of Olives, where He forewarns them of their fear and cowardice. Led by Peter, they all declare their willingness to die with Him. Coming to Gethsemane, He withdraws, and wrestles with God, "being in an agony;" meanwhile the *three* disciples sleep, for which Jesus rebukes them. On His return the third time, He bids them rise, because the betrayer is at hand.

I.—THE TRAITOR DISCOVERED.—V. 17—21. *In the evening*,—"when the hour was come" for eating the Paschal lamb, Luke xxii. 14; Exod. xii. 6—8. V. 18. *They sat*,—reclined; at first the supper was eaten standing, Exod. xii. 11; afterwards it was eaten as an ordinary meal. *Jesus*,—"was troubled in spirit," &c., John xiii. 21. *Which eateth*,—as a friend cordially attached to Me. V. 19. *Sorrowful*,—that such a thing could possibly be suspected, and "looked one on another" to detect the traitor, and then, *one by one*, asked, *Is it I?* V. 20. *That dippeth*, &c.—"Which, it seems, Judas was doing at that very time," Matt. xxvi. 23; Luke xxii. 21; John xiii. 23—26. V. 21. *Goeth*,—to death. *As it is written.*—Isai. liii. 3—9; Dan. ix. 26. *Woe*,—corresponding with the awful character of the crime. *Good*,—better; i. e., he had better not have lived at all, than live to do this, Matt. xxvii. 3—5; Acts i. 18.

II. THE LORD'S SUPPER.—V. 22—25. *Took bread*,—"towards the end of the supper." *Blessed*,—not the bread, but gave thanks to God, according to the practice of the Jews. *Brake*,—an act significant of His own sufferings, 1 Cor. xi. 24. *This is*,—meaning, this represents *My body*. V. 23. *The cup*,—of thanksgiving, which the master of the family gave to each guest after supper. V. 24. *This*,—signifies *My blood* shed for you. *New testament*,—or covenant, placed in contrast with the old, Exod. xxiv. 6—8. V. 25 is prophetic of His speedy departure: "I shall not keep another Passover with you here." *Fruit of the vine*,—wine made of its grapes. *New*,—in the same sense as "new heavens," &c., to denote spiritual refreshment and joy.

III. CAUTION GIVEN, AND SELF-CONFIDENCE EXPRESSED.—V. 26—31. *An hymn.*—"It consisted of six Psalms, from Ps. cxiii. to cxviii." *Mount of Olives.*—On the east of Jerusalem, "over the brook Cedron," John xviii. 1. V. 27. *Offended*,—made to stumble and to flee from Me like terrified sheep, Zech. xiii. 7; ver. 50. V. 28 is a promise to cheer them, which was strictly fulfilled, ch. xvi. 7. V. 29. *Peter said*, &c.—Brave words, well meant, but not well kept. V. 30. *Unto him*,—with more direct and solemn warning. *Crow twice.*—It was accustomed to crow first at midnight, and again at break of day; the latter is called cock-crowing, ch. xiii. 35. *Thrice*,—three times, v. 66—72. V. 31. *More vehemently*,—with more emphasis and boldness; indignant, perhaps, that either his courage or his love should be suspected. *Said they all*,—influenced by Peter's example, but with less confidence.

IV. GETHSEMANE: SORROW AND SLEEP.—V. 32—42. *A place.*—St. John calls it a garden. *Gethsemane.*—The word signifies "valley of fatness," or, an "olive-press." *Shall pray*,—"yonder," Luke xxii. 41. V. 33. *Peter*, &c.—These three had seen His glory, Matt. xvii. 1—9; now they were to witness His grief and agony. *Sore amazed.*—"The original word imports the most shocking amazement, mingled with grief: and that word in the next verse which we render *sorrowful*,

intimates that He was surrounded with sorrow on every side, breaking in upon Him with such violence as was ready to separate His soul from His body."—*Wesley.* V. 34. *And watch,*—literally, "keep awake," "that ye," &c., Matt. xxvi. 41. V. 35. *Fell on,* &c.,—have first kneeled, Luke xxii. 41. *Possible,*—consistent with God's gracious purpose. *The hour,*—of that present, and most oppressive and mysterious anguish. V. 36. *Abba,*—i. e., Father. *All things.*—If Thou *wilt*, Thou *canst. This cup,*—of inward sorrow and suffering. *Nevertheless,* &c.—What a lesson in submission is this! V. 37. *Sleeping,*—though He had told them particularly to watch. *Unto Peter,*—whom He had so seriously warned against *temptation. One hour,*—for a short time. V. 38. *Ready,*—"willing" to bear these trials. *Weak,*—no strength in it; and, therefore, should not be trusted in. V. 40. *Wist,*—knew. V. 41. *Sleep on now,*—"for any further service you can be to Me." *Enough.*—Sleep has had its turn: if you would, you cannot sleep longer. *The hour,*—of betrayal. *Let us go,*—"wheresoever they lead us."

Reflections.—1. *A man had better die than live to sin against God.*—What is said of Judas is more or less true of every persistent sinner, v. 21.

2. *The Lord's Supper is the most solemn service of our holy religion.*—It keeps in mind the precious sacrifice of Christ as the purchase of our salvation. Judas was not there when it was instituted; no Judas ought ever to partake of it.

3. *How kind it is of God to warn us against coming danger.*—Jesus thus warned the disciples, v. 27, 30.

4. *The most boastful are not always the most faithful.*—Compare v. 29, 31, with v. 50, 66—72.

5. *It is quite lawful to pray for the removal or prevention of evils.*—Our Saviour did, yet only in dire extremity, Luke xxii. 43, 44; and then with perfect submission. He is our example.

6. *However godly men are, they should never trust in themselves for safety in danger or strength in duty,* v. 38.

7. *Sleep in the hour of prayer leads to cowardice in the hour of temptation.*

Questions.—How was the Passover eaten at first? What did Jesus say about His disciples? Who betrayed Him? How did Jesus point him out? What did He say of him? What does the bread signify? the wine? Why do we partake of the Lord's Supper? How should we do it? What did Jesus say to the disciples in the Mount of Olives? What did Peter reply? What answer did Jesus make to this? Which was right? What does "Gethsemane" mean? What did Jesus do? What did the disciples do? Did Jesus approve of this? What did He say at the third time?

Illustrations.—I. "THE DISH."

See v. 20. "The Jews, at the observance of this ordinance, used a bitter *sauce*, made of bunches of raisins mixed with vinegar, and other seasoning of the like kind, which they said represented the *clay* which their fathers were compelled to use in Egypt in making brick; thus reminding them of their bitter bondage there. This was, probably, the *dish* to which reference is here made."—*Barnes.*

II. GETHSEMANE.

See v. 32. "Gethsemane signifies the place of oil-presses; and was probably so called from the presses there used to obtain the oil from the olives, which gave its name to this celebrated mountain and district."—*R. Watson.*

AUGUST 16.—Morning Lesson.

TRANSGRESSION FORGIVEN.—Psalm xxxii.

Summary.—See heading of the Psalm. David teaches that safety and gladness are found through the forgiveness of sins; that in order to this there must be sorrow, confession, and prayer. God, by his mouth, gives us instruction, and warns against a disposition to refuse it.

I. The Blessedness of Forgiveness.—V. 1, 2; 10, 11.—*Transgression,*—literally means, "going over," or "beyond;" and so, sin is any breaking through, or trampling down, of the commands of God, 1 John iii. 4. *Forgiven,*—through the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, Rom. iv. 6—9, 24, 25. *Covered,*—hidden from the sight, Ps. li. 1, 9; Isai. xliv. 22. *Imputeth not,*—does not lay to his charge so as to punish it. *Iniquity,*—is, literally, perverseness of disposition, crookedness of life. *No guile,*—no hypocrisy, no reserve: "whose breast is full, not of feigned

repentance, but of a fervent love of holiness, and hatred of sin." V. 10. *Many sorrows*,—scourgings inflicted through the displeasure of God. *Trusteth*,—as he who is forgiven will be disposed and able to do. *Compass*,—embrace, surround, crown with favour, Ps. v. 12. V. 11 echoes, or repeats, v. 1, 2; the *righteous*, being those forgiven; the *upright in heart*, those without guile, Acts xiii. 38, 39; 2 Cor. v. 19—21; 1 John iii. 3.

II. Penitence, Prayer, and Protection.—V. 3—7. *Kept silence*,—determined not to confess my sin. *Waxed old*,—dried, and wasted away, *through my roaring*,—the inward distressful torture of my guilty conscience. *Thy hand*,—the sense of Thy displeasure. *My moisture*, &c.—"My heart was changed through the heat of summer:" "instead of being strong, beating, lively, it had become faint and dead," Ps. cii. 3, 4. V. 5. *I acknowledged*,—made known to Thee the sins of my life; and *have not hid*,—have fully opened my breast to show the secret faults of my soul. *And*,—as a consequence, through Thy mercy, *Thou forgavest* me, 1 John i. 8, 9. *For this* reason, because Thou art so full of mercy, so free to forgive, *shall every one*, &c. *In a time when*, &c. —See Isai. lv. 6, 7; Hosea x. 12. *Floods*, &c.—Alluding to the mountain-rivers swelling suddenly, to the danger of passengers. *Hiding-place*,—Ps. ix. 9; xxvii. 5. *With songs*,—making me sing in the presence of trouble, through the assurance of my own safety.

III. Guidance.—V. 8, 9. *In the way*,—of salvation and life, Ps. xvi. 11. *With mine eye*,—The Psalmist appears to mean,—Do you, who hear or read what I say, profit by my experience; learn from me the bitter folly of concealing sin, of refusing to repent of it humbly, and to ask pardon, v. 3, 4, and the wisdom of confessing it, and asking mercy! V. 9. *Not as the horse*, &c.—*no understanding*,—which cannot be reasoned into docility, or induced to tameness by seeing other mules "broken in." Do not behave like them; but, as men able to reason, learn, and act accordingly.

Reflections.—1. *Sin is manifold in its appearances.*—Sometimes it is wilful and positive disobedience,—*transgression*; sometimes it is corruption of character and life,—*iniquity*; sometimes it is secret and subtle wickedness in the heart,—*guile*. In all it is an "abominable thing," which God hates.

2. *A guilty conscience is a terrible scourge to the soul*, v. 3, 4.—"He who suppresses his sins without confessing them, conceals an inward wound, and burns with secret fire."

3. *Confession and prayer are a relief in themselves, and they secure, through mercy, the forgiveness and favour of God.*

4. *The knowledge of forgiveness is our privilege through Christ.*—Eph. i. 7; Hymn 733, v. 1—3.

Questions.—What does "transgression" mean? "iniquity?" "guile?" How are we forgiven? What is meant by sin "covered?" by "imputeth not?" Who are the "righteous?" the "upright in heart?" What does hiding sin cause to us? What do confession and prayer bring? How is there any merit in them? What is God to His people? What way will He teach them? Why are those who are forgiven blessed?

Illustration.—True happiness.

See v. 1, 2. "So that this is David's opinion of true happiness: he says not, blessed are those that reign over kingdoms; blessed are those generals who are renowned for their martial bravery and success, though he himself had both these titles to boast of. It is not the encomiums of the greatest multitudes, nor the breath of popular applause, nor any other degree of human honour; not he who ploughs many thousand acres of land, or who has heaped together mountains of gold and silver; but, 'O! happy man whose sins are pardoned!'"—*Archbishop Leighton.*

AUGUST 16.—Afternoon Lesson.

Exhortations and precepts. — Romans xii.

For repetition, verses, 1, 2.

Summary.—Having closed the argument of the Epistle, the Apostle now treats of practical topics, and shows that the doctrines taught, are rich with instruction as to the spirit and conduct of our lives. This chapter teaches us how to

live in the sight of God, and may be called "an exhortation to godliness." See heading of the chapter.

I. EXHORTATIONS.—V. 1—8.

(1.) *To devotion to God.* — V. 1, 2. *Mercies of God,*—especially those shown in our salvation by Jesus Christ, ch. iii. 21; v., viii. "The expression is particularly opposed to 'the wrath of God,' Rom. i. 18. It has a reference here to the entire Gospel, to the whole economy of grace or mercy, delivering us from 'the wrath of God,' and exciting us to all duty." — *Wesley. Bodies,*—your whole outward life and service, even as Christ gave Himself for you, ch. iv. 25; v. 8. *Living,*—not like the sacrifices under the law, which were slain; but in all the freshness and vigour of life, Heb. x. 5—9. *Holy,*—without blemish; pure and perfect, even as the law required, Deut. xv. 21; for Rom. vii. 12. *Acceptable,*—such as God will approve and bless. *Reasonable,*—i. e., such as an intelligent, spiritual, blood-bought creature ought to render. V. 2. *Not conformed,*—not like; either "in judgment, spirit, or behaviour." *This world,* — generation of men; living selfishly, giving no service to God. *Transformed,* &c.,—thoroughly changed, by being made anew, 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. iv. 23, 24. *Prove,*—test, understand, and rightly prize. *Will of God,*—as taught in the precepts of the Gospel.

(2.) *To humility and diligence.* — V. 3—8. *I say,*—set forth what the will of God is. *Through the grace,*—by which I am a Christian and an Apostle. *To every man,*—Jew and Gentile, ch. ii. 11. *But to think,*—with sober, sound judgment, with honest modesty, with wise and holy intention. *The measure,*—the proportion: "both faith, and the measure (proportion given) of faith is the gift of God." V. 4. *Not the same office,*—the eye sees, the head thinks, the tongue speaks, the feet walk, &c., 1 Cor. xii. 12—21. V. 5. *So we,*— though one in Christ, have various duties to perform, according to our several *gifts.* V. 6. *Differing,*—as it hath pleased Him to make them. *Prophecy,*—the "explanation of Scripture prophecies," the expounding of Scripture truths and duties. *The proportion,* — analogy: the quality and vigour of faith, v. 3. V. 7. *Ministry,*—service rendered by deacons and stewards, Acts vi. 1 — 3. *Teacheth,*—instructeth the "catechumens; for whom particular instructers were appointed." V. 8. *Exhorteth,*—urging to a conscientious and practical observance of Christian duties. *Giveth,* (Margin, "imparteth,")—distributes. *Simplicity,* (Margin, "liberally,") — singleness, honesty of purpose. *Diligence,* — attention and care. *Showeth mercy,*—to the sick, infirm, needy, &c.

II. PRECEPTS.—V. 9—21. *Dissimulation,* — hypocrisy, guile. *Abhor,*—hate and turn from. *Cleave,* — "the word denotes, properly, the act of glueing, or uniting firmly by glue." V. 10. *Kindly affectioned,* — "tender affection, such as that which subsists between parents and children." *Preferring,* — going before, seeking to surpass each other in showing mutual respect and honour. V. 11. *Serving the Lord,*— doing everything as to Him, Col. iii. 17, 23, 24. V. 12. *In hope,*—of everlasting life, and so *patient,* &c., ch. v. 2—5. *Continuing instant,*—not through indifference or discouragement ceasing, Luke xviii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 17. V. 13. *Distributing,* &c. — Communicate to, relieve all Christians that are in want. *Hospitality,* — entertaining travellers or strangers, Heb. xiii. 2. V. 14. See Matt. v. 43, 44. V. 15. Always show sympathy with others, both in joy and grief. V. 16. *Of the same,* &c.—Desire the same good for others which you desire for yourselves. *High things,*—riches, honour, &c. *Condescend,* &c.—See Margin. *Conceits,*—lofty opinions of yourselves. V. 17. *Recompense,* — return, or give back. *Provide,*—think beforehand, so as not to do wrong through rashness, 2 Cor. viii. 21. *As much as lieth in you.*—Note the emphasis in reading "in *you;*" so far as you are concerned, by softening the anger of others, by refraining from quarrels yourselves. V. 19. *Dearly beloved,*—a tender expression, to "soften rugged spirits," and prepare them for what he is about to say. *Avenge not.*—Do not take revenge for injuries done to you, leave your enemies to God; for Deut. xxxii. 35. V. 20. *Therefore,*—pursue thy course of Christian charity and benevolence as though he had not wronged thee. *Coals of fire,* &c.—See Illustration. V. 21. *Be not overcome,*

&c.—Persevere in kindness till kindness thoroughly conquers the hatred of thy enemy.

Reflections.—1. *The duties of Christianity spring out of its doctrines.*—These various teachings seem to have been suggested to St. Paul while pursuing the argument of the epistle.

2. *Our first duty springs out of God's boundless grace to us:*—it is that we consecrate ourselves to Him with all intelligence of purpose, purity of affection, and vigorous activity of life, Luke x. 27; 2 Cor. viii. 5.

3. *We cannot know the will of God till we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus; because* 1 Cor. ii. 14—16.

4. *The measure of our faith is the measure of our ability, and especially of our success in God's work.*

5. *Whatever may be our place and duty in the Church of Christ, we should devote ourselves to that with all humility and zeal, with all faith and cheerfulness.*

6. *We should pray earnestly that the precepts of God's Word may be written on our hearts.*

Questions.—How does the Apostle exhort us? What is chiefly meant by "mercies?" To what does he exhort us? What kind of sacrifice is it to be? How are we to be "not conformed to this world?" What is meant by "renewing?" How may we "prove" the will of God? What is it to "think soberly?" What is "the measure of faith?" How do God's gifts differ? How ought we to use them? What should love be "without?" How should we treat each other? What should we be in business? in spirit? in purpose? What should we do to poor saints? strangers? to those who persecute us? What should be our disposition? v. 16. How should we seek to live? What should we do to an enemy?

Illustration.—"heap coals of fire on his head."

See v. 20. "The end of all vengeance is that an enemy may be brought to repent, and that an enemy may deliver himself into the hands of the avenger. A man will very often attain both objects, if he treats his enemy with kindness."

"So artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
By heaping coals of fire upon its head;
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
And pure from dross the silver runs below."

AUGUST 23.—Morning Lesson.

MARAH, AND THE MURMURERS.—Exodus xv. 22—27; xvi. 1—8.

Summary.—The people, being thirsty, go in search of water, and find some at Marah; but it is bitter, and they complain. At the command of God, Moses makes the water sweet; and instructs them to obey God, that it may be well with them. They journey to Elim; and the people murmur again, because there is no bread. The rain of manna is promised, and they are to see in it the glory of the Lord, and to be reproved for their murmurings, which are truly against Him rather than against Moses and Aaron.

I. Murmuring because the Waters are Bitter.—Ch. xv. 22—27. *Shur*,—or Etham, Num. xxxiii. 8, "the tract of desert which separates Egypt from Palestine." *No water.*—This must have been a severe trial to them! *Marah.*—Margin, "bitterness." *Could not drink*,—although they had been three days without any: the waters of Marah must have been very bitter. V. 24. *Murmured*, &c. They looked to Moses with the helplessness of children, and their conduct was as peevish; but we must not forget what a degrading influence long years of slavery had exercised upon their character. V. 25. *Unto the Lord*,—as naturally as the people did to him. *Made sweet*,—not by any virtue in the tree, but by the miraculous power of God. *A statute*, &c.—Established it as a law of His government over them, that He could help them in any emergency; could "supply all their need." *Proved*,—tested their willingness to recognize His gracious Providence and Almighty Power. V. 26. *And said*,—obedience to all that I command will secure My blessing and protection. *These diseases*,—such as the plagues. *Healeth*,—having power to prevent as well as to cure disease. V. 27. *Elim*,—about six miles south of Marah. *Twelve wells*,—corresponding with the number of the tribes. *Palm-trees*,—which delight in places well watered, and whose fruit is dates; so that this must have been a delightful encampment.

II. Murmuring because there is no Bread.—Ch. xvi. 1—3. *Sin.*—"It

still bears the same name." *Fifteenth day*, &c.—Just a month after they came out of Egypt, ch. xii. 18. *Murmured*,—again: how soon they forgot the sweetening of the waters! V. 3. *Would to God*, &c.—They seem now to think their lot in Egypt quite comfortable in comparison with their present distress, and that they might as well have died *by the hand of the Lord*, like the Egyptians, as to perish with hunger in the desert.

III. Bread Promised.—V. 4—8. *I will rain bread*,—will work a perpetual miracle for your daily supply. The fulfilment of this promise, recorded in the after part of this chapter, will be the Lesson for next Sunday afternoon, when we can consider it more particularly. V. 8. *Against the Lord*,—we are but His servants: you will have to answer for this sin of complaining to Him.

Reflections.—1. *It is easy to reflect upon other people for impatience, when, probably, we ourselves have nothing to try us.*—We justly censure the conduct of the Israelites at Marah, but if we had been there, should we have been more patient than they?

2. *Every instance of God's kindness should rebuke the spirit of murmuring and distrust of His Providence.*

3. *Obedience to God is our first duty, and best policy*, ch. xv. 26.

4. *A disposition to murmur magnifies present evils, and lessens absent ones*, ch. xvi. 3.

5. *People often think they are only finding fault with their fellow-men, when, in truth, they are finding fault with God.*

6. *How condescending and forbearing God is!*—He does not smite the Israelites, but supplies their wants. Ps. ciii. 13, 14.

Questions.—What did the people complain of at Marah? How were the waters cured? What did God intend to teach by this? How to prove them? What did He promise if they were obedient? Where did they journey next? What kind of place was it? Where did they go from Elim? See Num. xxxiii. 10, 11. What did they murmur at in Sin? What did they say? Against whom did they really murmur? What did God promise?

Illustration.—MARAH.

See v. 23. "The first spot on the road from *Ayun Musa* to Sinai, where water can be found, is in the well of *Howâra*, thirty-three English miles from the former. It is now a basin of six or eight feet in diameter, with two feet of water in it; but so disagreeably bitter and salt, that the Bedouins consider it the worst water in the whole neighbourhood. The distance from Ayun Musa, and the quality of the water, both favour the identity of Howâra and Marah. A whole people, travelling with children, cattle, and baggage, could not accomplish the distance in less than three days, and there is no other water on the road from Ayun Musa to Howâra. Hence, from the time of Burckhardt, who was the first to re-discover the well, Howâra has been regarded as the Marah of the Israelites."—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

AUGUST 23.—Afternoon Lesson.

BETRAYAL AND DENIAL.—Mark xiv. 43—72.

For repetition, verses 71, 72.

Summary.—Even while Jesus is speaking, Judas comes with the Jews, and betrays Him with a kiss. One of the disciples offers resistance; but Jesus questions the multitude, and yields to them. They lead Him to the High Priest; before whom He is accused, witnesses against Him being zealously sought for. Christ declares His high character and mission; whereupon they charge Him with blasphemy, and condemn Him to death. Peter being challenged, denies three times that he has anything to do with Jesus.

I. The Betrayal and Arrest.—V. 43—52. *A great multitude*,—a band of soldiers and officers, John xviii. 3. *Staves*,—clubs, or sticks of wood. *From the chief priests*, &c.,—who plotted the whole movement, v. 1, 10, 11. V. 44. *I shall kiss*,—an unmistakable sign. *Take Him*,—"hold Him fast." *Safely*,—"with due precaution," lest He slip from your hands. How anxious Judas seems to be that the arrest should be sure and safe. V. 45. *Goeth straightway*,—not to salute Him first as a token of respect, but with a subtle design. *Kissed Him.*—A usual mode of salutation in the East. Jesus rebuked him for this, Matt. xxvi. 50; Luke xxii. 48. V. 47. *One of them.*—John says it was Peter, John xviii. 10, 11. V. 48. *As*

against a thief,—who lurks in secret places lest he should be caught, and who would resist the attempt to arrest him. V. 49. *I was daily*, &c.—You might have taken Me at any time, instead of coming under cover of night, with an armed escort, and a treacherous guide. V. 50. *All*,—the disciples: v. 27—31. *A certain young man*,—perhaps Mark himself. *The young men*, &c.—The soldiers, Roman youths.

II. The Examination by the High Priest.—V. 53—65. *Were assembled*, &c.—They had most likely remained together from the time spoken of, Matt. xxvi. 3. V. 54. *Followed Him afar off*, —showing sincere affection and concern for Jesus, but also fear for his own safety. *Even into*, &c.—See John xviii. 15, 16, 18. V. 55. *Sought for witness*, —no doubt offering money. *None*,—that was conclusive, for v. 56. V. 58. *I will destroy*, &c.—This is a perversion of what Jesus did say, John ii. 19—21. V. 60. *Asked Jesus*,—hoping He would convict Himself, since they could make nothing of the witnesses. V. 61. *Held His peace*,—knowing, as they themselves did, that such evidence was worth nothing. V. 61. *Son of the blessed*,—"of God," according to Matt. xxvi. 63; the high priest knew that a plain confession of any such pretension would be fatal to Him. V. 62. Compare Luke xxii. 67—70. V. 63. *Rent his clothes*,—"as a token of indignation, astonishment, and grief." V. 64. *Blasphemy*,—in claiming for Himself, whom they thought a mere man, "the majesty and glory peculiar to God." *Guilty*,—deserving of death according to their law. V. 65. *Spit on Him*,—an act expressive of the greatest contempt. *Buffet*,—to strike with closed hands. *Prophesy*,—thus ridiculing His pretensions. *With the palms*,—slapping on the mouth with open hands.

III. The Denial by Peter.—V. 66—72. *Beneath*.—"The part where Jesus and the council were was elevated, probably, above the rest, for a tribunal." V. 67. *Looked upon him*,—to make sure she was right before speaking: she had let him into the palace, John xviii. 17. V. 68. *Neither understand I*, &c.—I am such a stranger to the man, that I wonder thou shouldest even dream of making such a charge. *He went out*,—no doubt feeling embarrassed and conscience-stricken. *The cock crew*,—calling to his mind what Jesus had said. V. 69. *Saw him again*,—perhaps the same one. V. 70. *A little after*,—perhaps Peter had returned into the palace, John xviii. 25, 26. *Thy speech agreeth*,—there being something peculiar in it by which the Galilean could be known. V. 71. *To curse*, &c.,—vexed beyond endurance that he should be so detected. V. 72. *The second time*,—fulfilling, literally, the words of Christ, v. 30. *When he thought*, &c.—Luke xxii. 61, 62.

Reflections.—1. *It is easier to be brave with the sword than bold to confess the truth.*—Look at Peter, v. 47, 66—71.

2. *It is courting temptation to follow Jesus afar off.*—Peter would have been in less danger of sinning close by the side of Jesus.

3. *One successful temptation places us at the mercy almost of the next that comes.*—Peter seems to have been an illustration of this. Note on v. 68.

4. *Nothing but bitterness of soul can follow our denial of Christ, if we have any attachment to Him at all.*—Peter was really attached to Jesus; no wonder, then, that afterwards he "wept bitterly."

Questions.—Who were the "multitude?" What token did Judas give them? What did he advise them? What did Peter do? What did Jesus say to the multitude? What did the disciples do? What were the soldiers going to do to the young man? What did he do? Where did they take Jesus? What did the chief priests seek against Him? What did the high priest ask Him? What did Jesus say? What did the priests say then? How many times did Peter deny Christ? What did he do afterwards?

Illustration.—"A great multitude with swords," &c.

See v. 43, and John xviii. 3. "Josephus says that at the festival of the Passover, when a great multitude of people came to observe the feast, lest there should be any disorder, a band of men was commanded to keep watch at the porches of the Temple, to repress a tumult, if any should be excited. This *band*, or guard, was at the disposal of the chief priests, Matt. xxvii. 65. It was composed of Roman soldiers, and was stationed chiefly at the tower of Antonia, at the north-west of the Temple. These were armed with *swords*." The rest with what was accessible to them.

AUGUST 30.—Morning Lesson.

THE CRY OF THE PEOPLE. — Mark xv. 1 — 21.

Summary.—The next morning Jesus is brought before Pilate, and examined by him. Pilate desires to release Him, but the people clamour for His death; Pilate yields to their cry, releases Barabbas, and delivers Jesus to their will. The soldiers mock Him, and lead Him out to crucify Him.

I. Pilate's Examination.—V. 1—5. *A consultation*, &c. — They had condemned Him to death, now they consult as to the best means of getting Pilate to carry out the sentence. *The whole*,—some of the *council* had not been with them the preceding night. *Bound Jesus*,—possibly to secure Him against any attempt at escape, but probably to signify to Pilate that He was under their sentence of death. V. 2. *Art Thou the King?* &c.—This was the charge they preferred against Him now, Luke xxiii. 2: they knew Pilate would not care for the charge on which they had condemned Him, ch. xiv. 61, 62. *Thou sayest*,—Thou art right: *I* am, John xviii. 36, 37. V. 3. *Of many things.*—Luke xxiii. 5; they had no definite charge which they could prove; and Jesus, knowing this, *answered nothing.*

II. Who shall be released?—V. 6—14. *Whomsoever.*—It was the people's privilege to name the prisoner to be freed. *Barabbas*,—a man notorious for violence, lawlessness, and *murder*, Luke xxiii. 19. *Insurrection*,—a popular outbreak, or disturbance. V. 8. *As he had ever done.*—It was an old custom, but its origin is uncertain. V. 10. *For envy*, — because He was so popular with the people. V. 11. *But the chief priests*, &c.—The people, left to themselves, would, perhaps, have asked for Jesus. V. 14. *What evil?* &c. — Pilate, being convinced of the innocence of Christ, ought to have resisted this clamour. *More exceedingly*,—the excitement and tumult increasing under priestly influence.

III. The Guilty freed; the Innocent condemned. — V. 15 — 21. *Willing*,—to please the people rather than do justice. *Scourged*,—this was customary before crucifixion. *Prætorium.*—The hall of the Governor, where he sat to administer justice. *Whole band*,—the tenth part of a Roman legion, consisting of from four to six hundred men. V. 17. *Purple*,—Matthew says "scarlet:" "the ancients gave the name purple to any colour with a mixture of red in it." *Platted*,—wove a wreath *of thorns*. *A reed.*—Compare Matt. xxvii. 29, 30. *Worshipped*,—in mockery. *Compel*, — probably Simon was a friend to Christ. *Cyrenian.*—"Cyrene was a city of Libya, in Africa. *Alexander and Rufus*,—"both celebrated among the first Christians."

Reflections.—1. *Innocence strengthens us to be calm under provocation.*—Isai. liii. 7.

2. *What a blinding, maddening thing envy is?*—Beware of it.

3. *Designing men can easily enlist popular passions in their cause.*

4. *Sympathy with the Saviour should be practical in its expression.*—Like Simon, we should bear His cross after Him.

Questions.—What did the Jews consult about? Why did they bind Jesus? What did Pilate ask Him? Why did not Jesus answer the charges of the Jews? Why did Pilate marvel! Whom did the people ask to be released? Who was he? Why did Pilate wish to release Jesus? v. 10. Who prompted the people? Why did Pilate release Barabbas, and bind Jesus? What did the soldiers do to Jesus? What else? Who carried the cross?

Illustration.—SCOURGING.

See v. 15. "Among the Romans it was customary to scourge, or whip, a *slave* before he was crucified. This was done to inflict a greater suffering than crucifixion would be alone, and to add to the horrors of the punishment. Our Lord, being about to be put to death after the manner of a *slave*, was also treated as a slave; as one of the lowest and most despised of mankind."—*Barnes.*

The remaining Lesson for August will be given in the next Number.

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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

HUMILITY ESSENTIAL TO TEACHERS.

"TO Teachers!" some one may possibly exclaim, as his eye glances at the heading of this piece; "I admit that it is essential to the taught, but why is humility particularly commended to the teacher?" We quite agree with our friend that the scholar should be most humble, and we desire such a revolution in our Sunday-schools as shall make the elder scholars no longer practically "masters of the situation," whose will and pleasure are to be consulted, whether about the Whitsuntide excursion, or the internal arrangements of the school. In not a few of our modern schools it has come to pass that the teacher has to be obliged to the scholars for their presence, and not the scholars for the teacher's! But our present business is with the teacher.

"Lord, I am hell, but Thou art heaven; I am a sink of sin, but Thou art a gracious God," said "meek and lowly" Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, "when he came to the place where he was to die . . . which was near to the great elm-tree over against the College of Priests, where he was wont to preach." What need have all teachers, whether in the pulpit or in the school, to blush over their small doings when compared with the labours and self-denial of this illustrious martyr! It is instructively recorded of him that he was "spare of diet, more spare of words, and sparest of time;" and that "no father in his household, no gardener in his garden, nor husbandman in his vineyard, was more occupied than he in his diocese, among his flock, going about his towns and villages in teaching and preaching to the people." While holding up Hooper as an incentive to humility, the writer cannot forbear to express a wish that the evangelical Sunday-schools would combine in a movement to place statues of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Hooper in prominent parts of our larger towns, as a testimony for Protestantism and against Ritualism, as a caution to those who pamper Popery, and as commending humility to us all.

Humility is essential to the investigation of the truths to be spoken of in the class.—"The foundation of our philosophy," says Sir William Hamilton, "is humility; for it is professedly a scientific demonstration of the impossibility of that wisdom in high matters

which the Apostle prohibits us even to attempt; and it proposes, from the limitation of the human powers, from our impotence to comprehend what, however, we must admit,—to show articulately why the secret things of God cannot but be to many 'past finding out.' Humility thus becomes the cardinal virtue, not only of revelation, but of reason; and philosophy is found to be the most useful auxiliary of theology." "I will show thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth," said the celestial Visiter to Daniel. But what had been Daniel's mood previously? "How can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord?" And what had been his attitude? "I stood trembling;" and again, "I set my face toward the ground." The humbled heart perceives, receives, and assimilates the truth for future service.

Humility is essential to securing the Divine favour.—God "giveth grace to the humble." The Lord is not, will not, cannot be with the teacher who is proud of his person, status, talents, preparation, or "what else!" He will find himself defeated, through pride, of attempted success in the subjugation of the veriest "Ai" of an infant-class; for, when the Lord is not with us, we labour in vain. And God is so far from being with the proud, that He "resisteth" them. Humility draws upon Omnipotence for strength, upon Omniscience for knowledge, upon Omnipresence for supply, upon Infinite Wisdom for thought, and upon Infinite Love for heart. Some teachers wonder why their influence over their scholars is less commanding, and why their lessons are less effective, to-day than aforetime. Perhaps a severe self-scrutiny might disclose the painful but wholesome fact, that their loss dates from the time when it could no more be said, "Thou wast little in thine own sight."

Humility is essential to being in favour with man.—If there is one thing that is more utterly distasteful and offensive than another in the school, it is pride. While unconscious humility—the humility not of servile abjectness, but of Christian principle and self-rule—wins golden opinions among fellow-teachers, and with all grades of scholars; while human nature takes a secret delight in the mortification of a self-conceited man, and laughs with satisfaction at some humiliating catastrophe to a teacher who may chance to owe more of his dignity to his dress than to himself; any mishap or wrong befalling a modest, unassuming, ministering teacher, is inwardly mourned or resented by all who know it. Let it not be thought that this is a trifling matter. No good can be done by the highest intellect, or the most facile teaching, unless we have the good-will of those whom we instruct. One has noticed from time to time that, while

a teacher of superior education and position has been unpopular in the school, a coadjutor of a much lower mental type, unable to read without betraying his Galilean pronunciation, has been a "great favourite." This is not because learning and social status are at a discount in our schools; but because pride is so. Where the rich and educated are models of self-denial and unpatronizing condescension,—and many such there are,—their influence among co-teachers and the young disciples is paramount. Now, though it is despicable to hunt for popularity, and to affect bland manners and obsequious behaviour to this end, it is a duty commended of God to please all men for their "good to edification." There is no more direct way to the hearts of others than habitual, self-sacrificing humility.

Humility is essential to personal comfort.—A proud teacher is always ready to take offence from others; and, thereby, inflicts misery on himself. What they call in Lancashire a "touchous" man, and in Shropshire a man who "gets into a poor way," is a trouble to all around, but is the greatest trouble to himself. He slights himself because other people slight him. Half the quarrels,—far more than half the quarrels,—that sometimes, unfortunately, arise in "Teachers' Meetings," are bred of touchiness. Now, granted that it is not desirable that a teacher's feelings should be impenetrable, it surely is a general, and, much more, a personal calamity when any one is so sensitive that a passing breath affects him. Even if positive unkindness has been shown, it would be well to remember the sentiment of a verse in Jane Taylor's description of "Honest John Tompkins:"—

> "If any one wrong'd him, or treated him ill,
> Why John was good-natured and sensible still;
> For he said that, revenging an injury done,
> Would be making two rogues where there need be but one."

But we will venture to say that, if an analysis were made of all the offences which have arisen in our Sunday-schools, and their origin were traced, it would be found that, in five cases out of six, they have sprung out of incidents which could hardly be detailed to disinterested parties without a smile. Let teachers, for their own sake, as well as for the sake of others, resolve never to be offended with anything but sin. And, in order to this, let them cultivate the affecting humility of Him who "made Himself of no reputation;" and who said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." S.

THE SEARCH: AN ALLEGORY.

A WANDERER in a far country journeyed in search of a certain precious stone, whose place of concealment was known to very few.

This stone, it was said, would impart to its possessor constant enjoyment of life, and would lift him above the influence of gloom or sadness. He travelled alone, for none could aid him in his search. His garments were soiled and worn, and his countenance was full of care; so many and wearisome had been his wanderings.

More than once he fancied he had found the precious treasure, but he had as often been disappointed. Years passed away, and then he said to himself, "I have gained experience, and shall know more, surely, when I really become possessed of the object of my search. I shall not be deceived again." Yet he was sick at heart, for his hope was deferred.

As he mused, there came unto him one clad in bright array, of graceful form and noble bearing. Her countenance was bright and attractive, and her voice stirred his soul deeply. She approached him with words of encouragement, and cheered him with hopes of a glorious future; for "I," said she, "can bestow the talisman, the precious stone you seek. Follow me, and it shall be yours."

He obeyed; and for a time a wondrous change came over him. His griefs were forgotten, his fears vanished; his path was strewn with flowers; he was sought after, admired, talked of, flattered; he grew almost giddy when he found himself rising to the pinnacle of renown. He laboured night and day, sparing neither pains nor strength; and, when at last he claimed that which she had promised, Fame vanished, and left him, more toil-worn than ever, to pursue his search.

In years gone by he had in vain asked Wealth, Pleasure, and Philosophy to point out or supply the hidden treasure; but all had failed to fulfil their promise to secure it for him. But now he was again foiled and disappointed, and in the bitterness of his heart he had almost given up his quest, when another form drew near, quite different from any he had yet beheld. Her aspect was full of sweetness and purity, her eyes beamed with tenderness, and endurance was written on her face. She offered to guide him to the desired object, and her tones were so gentle and winning, that he followed her. He seemed nearer to the realization of his hopes than he had ever been before; for she healed some of the wounds from which he had long smarted, she lightened his burdens, and removed many briers and thorns from his path.

Her beauty was of a nobler kind than that of the other beings whose false promises had allured him; and he began to think that his weary wanderings were about to end. But, alas! he found that she, too, failed to confer on him what he had been led to expect. The charm she possessed was powerless to satisfy all the cravings of his heart; and now the weary man was compelled to learn that even

Affection had not the priceless treasure in her keeping.

Faint and despairing, he lay down to die, when suddenly a radiant light beamed across his path, and a Voice, not of the earth, spoke thus: "I have watched, O weary one! thy toil and pain; I have followed thee in thy eager search; I have marked the decay of all thy false hopes; now, if thou wilt leave all, and follow Me, I will satisfy the desires of thine heart." Believing the Voice, the pilgrim, with difficulty, arose and followed, for he was weak as well as weary; but those tones were such as he had never heard before, and the faith and hope which they inspired, gave him strength to obey.

He soon came to a place where was a Cross; and, while he gazed in speechless wonder at the light which streamed from it, the Voice spake again thus: "It was here, O wanderer! I purchased for thee the right and power to possess that treasure which alone can do all that others have falsely promised. Take this as My free gift."

And behold there was given unto him a "white stone," and his own name was written therein. He buried his cares, his sins, his doubts, his unfulfilled desires, at the foot of that Cross: then, clad in a spotless garment, provided for him, he went on his way, greatly rejoicing.

His weary soul had rest, his thirsty heart was satisfied, his peace unbroken, his strength renewed. Affection still went with him, but now wearing immortality and the beauty of purest love. When he met other baffled, faint, and weary pilgrims, such as he once had been, he showed them the secret of his happiness, and directed them to the place where alone it could be obtained.

Ryde. ELSIE.

THE LOFTY AIM OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK.

ALTHOUGH the Sabbath-school is not of Divine institution, its work can but be of very great importance, since the object of it is—or constantly should be—the salvation of souls.

What transcendent value is attached to the soul, both in Creation and Redemption! In the human body, the material and inferior part of man, we have a greater display of the skill, power, and wisdom of the Creator than is to be found in all the world besides. What a magnificent piece of mechanism it is; and, in all its parts and arrangements, how exactly suitable for the residence of the soul, that immaterial, uncompounded existence which sickness cannot waste, nor death itself destroy; yet the body, with all its mechanism, symmetry, beauty, and grace, apart from the soul, is but a clod of earth in a desert-world. Without this *thinking* principle, this earth, with all its splendour and furniture, would be but one vast solitude, whose silence would never be broken by the audible and intelligent voice of prayer and praise.

"Know'st thou the value of a soul immortal?
Behold this midnight pomp,—worlds on worlds!
Amazing pomp! Redouble the amaze;
Ten thousand add, and twice ten thousand more:
Then weigh the whole, one soul outweighs them all!"

The soul is the most noble work of God; but look at its value as displayed in Redemption.

Our estimate of the preciousness of objects is generally regulated by the

price we pay for them, by the sacrifices or efforts we make to obtain them, or by the affection in which we hold them. The honest, God-fearing man will uphold his integrity at the cost of his property, his business, his freedom, and all that is dear to him; esteeming his character and integrity as his most valuable possessions.

What price, then, was paid by the All-wise Creator for the redemption of the human soul! What sacrifice did He make,—what effort did He put forth, to restore man to the Divine favour and image! Sometimes man acts rashly; and, at other times, although he may be ever so cautious, he acts wrongly; but not so with God. His infinite wisdom could not permit the payment of an unnecessary or exorbitant price for man's salvation. He would not display greater power than the case demanded, nor would the sacrifice be made for that which, in its value, was unworthy of it.

But mark the words of Scripture! Jesus said, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." St. Paul wrote, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." St. Peter also wrote, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." These passages are illustrious proofs of the value of the human soul. Who, or what could be so dear to the Divine Father as the Divine Son, the same in nature, power, and glory? To HIM, as well as to the Father, do angels owe their existence, their supernal grace and dignity; and with equal song do these exalted beings celebrate the excellency and praise of the Father and of the Son. So intimate and indissoluble is the union between these Two, that Jesus affirmed, "I and my Father are One." The Son is "The brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His Person." Co-equal, co-eternal, and "beloved," yet the Father "delivered Him up for us all."

"Stronger His love than death or hell;
Its riches are unsearchable:
The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see;
They cannot reach the mystery,
The length, and breadth, and height."

If the price paid for the soul's redemption be infinite, can the value of it be less?—a value which none but God Himself can compute. Seeing that such is the case, no efforts for the benefit of the soul can be insignificant; and such as aim directly at its salvation from death are of the first and grandest importance.

Since this is the very aim and end of our Sunday-school work, we who are engaged in it may well inquire, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Who will venture upon such a service in his own strength? In view of his great responsibility to God for the children committed to his care, who will—even occasionally, much less constantly—repair to his class without first being thoroughly prepared, or without first and earnestly seeking help from on high?

Are we not co-workers with the Saviour in carrying out this scheme of redemption? Do we not aim at the salvation of inestimably precious souls? If so, we should seek a larger endowment of the Spirit of Christ; for, in proportion as we obtain that, we shall be self-denying and humble in our work, —meek, gentle, and loving in our manner,—clear, simple, persuasive, and earnest in our method of conveying instruction; and the whole will be crowned with a faithfulness which has

continual reference to the "recompense of reward,"—the "well done" of our Master at the end of the day.

G. H.

HINTS FOR USE IN THE CLASS.

1. In every lesson, so far as possible, *Stick to one point.*—Don't attempt to cram children's minds with too much. Say to yourself, "such and such is *the* point in my lesson, let all the rest of my teaching revolve round that." One point fixed on the mind is better than twenty in at one ear and out at the other.

2. *Be simple.*—Don't shoot over the children's heads. I had to look over a sketch of a lesson for infants on the creation, the other day, prepared by a young teacher, in which she was proposing to talk of the "sun culminating at noon," "the causes of an eclipse," and so on. I simply put my pen through the whole lesson. Many of you would be astonished to find how very little most of the children take away from your lessons, because you do not come down to their comprehensions.

3. *Proceed from the known to the unknown;* always, that is, start from what is within the range of the child's observation, and gradually lead up to what is beyond that range. If you begin with what is abstruse, you convey no meaning; e.g., suppose the subject to be God's love to man. To begin by speaking of it as infinite, and so on, conveys no idea. Begin from a mother's love: let the children give instances of how love is shown, and then lead them to see the greatness of the love of God. I might multiply examples indefinitely, but this must suffice.

4. *Don't preach.*—I know well what a temptation it is, to our male friends especially, who have the love of God in their hearts, and have also the gift of fluent speech, to preach to their class; but there is a time for everything, and in teaching bear in mind that children remember long what they tell you, but soon forget what you tell them. In this lies just the difference between a good teacher and a bad. A good teacher draws out the observation, reflections, &c., of the children, and so makes them remember; a bad teacher tells them a mass of information, which is no sooner heard than forgotten, because the child himself is not worked, and takes no part in the lesson.

5. *Don't neglect the dull children.*—There is such a temptation to push forward the clever ones, and neglect the rest. But it is the lower half of a class which is the test of a good teacher. It is easy enough to teach a child who is anxious to learn, but the dull and stupid ones surely want most care!

6. For their benefit, *Be graphic.*—You are teaching the parable of the "Sower." Picture out the crowds, the lake, the hills around, the boat; throw life and reality into the scene. An able writer, describing this, pictures boys as trying to spell Peter's name backwards on the stern of the boat. Or your lesson is on Simeon detained by Joseph as a prisoner. Picture the feelings of the wives watching the return of their husbands from a distance, and seeing *one short:* their agony of suspense to know *which it is.* I remember, as a young teacher, once describing Peter praying on the house-top,—the flat roof, the sea-beach below him, the sun shining on the waves, &c., to a class of big boys in Birmingham, and the next Sunday the lesson had hardly begun, before one began, and the whole number chimed in, "O, teacher, please tell us again about Peter, and the waves, and the roof; it was so nice!" And surely our Lord teaches us the same thing, now drawing

His illustrations from the birds flying above, now from the grass under His feet, the fig-tree, the leaven, the sower, the habits of children at their meals, or when playing in the market: these, and a thousand incidents of every-day life, and every-day experience, are pressed in by Christ to illustrate His doctrines. And I am quite sure that those lessons, and those sermons, are most interesting, best listened to, and best remembered, in which there have been most illustrations graphically pictured out, drawn from common scenes of every-day life.—*Church of England Sunday-School Magazine.*

RULES FOR HOME-EDUCATION.

The following are worthy of being printed in letters of gold, and being placed in a conspicuous position in every household: —

1. From your children's earliest infancy, inculcate the necessity of instant obedience.

2. Unite firmness with gentleness. Let your children always understand that you mean exactly what you say.

3. Never promise them anything, unless you are sure you can give them what you promise.

4. If you tell a child to do anything, show him how to do it, and see that it is done.

5. Always punish your children for wilfully disobeying you, but never punish in anger.

6. Never let them perceive that they can vex you, or make you lose your self-command.

7. If they give way to petulance and temper, wait till they are calm, and then gently reason with them on the impropriety of their conduct.

8. Remember that a little present punishment, when the occasion arises, is much more effectual than the threatening of a greater punishment, should the fault be renewed.

9. Never give your children anything because they cry for it.

10. On no account allow them to do at one time what you have forbidden, under the like circumstances, at another.

11. Teach them that the only sure and easy way to appear good, is to be good.

12. Accustom them to make their little recitals the perfect truth.

13. Never allow of tale-bearing.

14. Teach them that self-denial, not self-indulgence, is the appointed and sure method of securing happiness.

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

EXTRACT FROM AN INFANT-SCHOOL TEACHER'S DIARY.

Willie was absent, and that fact much diminished the enjoyment of the Bible-lesson time. How I missed the dear little sensitive face, the quick intelligent look, and the timid answer! Anxious to know the reason of his absence, I set off to seek his home; but before I reached the house, I was informed that it was his home no longer. That little form, so solemn, so still in death, was not my pupil. Our relations were suddenly reversed; and I was the taught one, not the teacher. May I not forget the lesson!

The mother of my late scholar was very calm, for she was a Christian, and enjoyed the consolations which Christianity alone can afford. We talked of all his winning ways; and she told me how patiently he bore his sufferings.

Once, when in great pain, he said, "Mother, lift me up, please, and let me kneel; I want to pray." But the poor little frame was too feeble to bear the exertion. His mother comforted him

with the thought that Jesus knew all about his sickness and wants, and how weak he was. So he said his accustomed prayer, adding, "and God bless my teachers!" Then his mind wandered, and consciousness never returned.

A few mornings before the commencement of his illness, his father took him for a walk up the Cemetery-road. At the top of the hill they sat down; and Willie sang "Catch the Sunshine." The next time they two went up that road together, the father returned without his boy; and his head was so bowed by sorrow, that he caught no glimpse of the "sunshine" in which his little one dwells for evermore.

O! I sadly miss those sympathetic eyes, so quickly moved to tears or smiles, which seemed such an inspiration to me in teaching. But, thank God, our little earth-star is not lost, only hidden by the light of heaven. It cannot now wander from the centre of true happiness. Here he has known hunger, and sorrow, and pain; but the Shepherd has gathered to His bosom the weary little lamb.

I thank God for one who will welcome me at heaven's gate. ANNIE.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

THE JEW AND HIS DAUGHTER.

A MINISTER, in a pleasant and much-frequented rural district, was preaching to his people, when he saw a man enter having every mark of a Jew in his face. He was well-dressed, and his looks seemed to tell that he had been in great sorrow. He took a seat, and listened in a serious and devout manner, while a tear was often seen to wet his careworn cheek.

After the service, the Minister went up to him, and said, "Sir, do I not address myself to one of the children of Abraham?" "You do," he replied. "May I ask how it is that I meet a Jew in a Christian church?" The substance of the Jew's account was as follows. He had been well educated, had come from one of our principal manufacturing towns; and, with his books, his riches, and a lovely daughter of seventeen, had found a charming retreat on the fruitful banks of the river which ran through the neighbourhood in which he was now residing. He had recently buried his wife, and he knew no pleasure but in the company of his beloved child. She was, indeed, worthy of a parent's love. Her mind was well informed, her disposition amiable, she could read and speak with ease various languages; and her manners pleased all who saw her. No wonder, then, that a doting father, whose head had now become sprinkled with grey, should place his whole affection on this lovely child. Being a strict Jew, he brought her up in the closest conformity to the principles of his religion.

It was not long since his daughter had been taken sick. The rose faded from her cheek, her eye lost its fire, her strength decayed, and it was soon too certain that death was creeping upon her frame. The father hung over her bed with a heart ready to break with anguish. He often tried to talk with her, but could seldom speak except by the language of his tears. He spared no expense or trouble in getting medical aid; but no human skill could extract the arrow of death, now fixed in her heart.

The father was walking in a wood near his house, when he was sent for by his dying daughter. With a heavy heart he entered the door of her chamber. He was now to take a last farewell of his dying child; and his religion gave him but a feeble hope as to a meeting hereafter.

The child grasped the hand of the parent with a death-cold hand. "My father, do you love me?"

"My child, you know that I love you,—that you are more dear to me than all the world beside."

"But, my father, do you love me?"

"Why, my child, do you give me pain? Have I never given you any proof of my love?"

"But, my dearest father, do you love me?"

The father could not answer. The child added, "I know, my dear father, you have ever loved me: you have been the kindest of parents, and I tenderly love you; will you grant me one request? O, my father, it is the dying request of your daughter! will you grant it."

"My dearest child, ask what you will; though it were the whole of my property, whatever it might be, it should be granted; I will grant it."

"My dear father, I beg you never again to speak against Jesus of Nazareth."

The father was dumb with surprise.

"I know," added the young girl, "I know but little about this Jesus, for I was never taught; but I know that He is a Saviour, for He has made Himself known to me since I have been sick, even for the salvation of my soul. I believe He will save me, though I have never before loved Him. I feel that I am going to Him, that I shall ever be with Him. And now, my dear father, do not deny me; I beg that you will never again speak against Jesus of Nazareth. I entreat you to obtain a New Testament, that tells of Him; and I pray that you may know Him; and, when I am no more, you may bestow on Him the love that was formerly mine."

The labour of speaking here overcame her feeble body; she stopped, looked up, pointing above her face with her forefinger, and in this manner her soul took its flight to that Saviour whom she loved and honoured.

The first thing the parent did, after he had buried his child, was to procure a New Testament. This he read; and taught by the Spirit from above, is now numbered among the meek and happy followers of Christ.—*Sunday Teachers' Treasury.*

THE YOUNG HOLLANDER.

A SHORT time since it was my privilege to be a visiter to a Sunday-school in Brooklyn which used to claim my willing services every week. After the opening exercises, the Superintendent asked me to take charge of a class whose teacher was absent. It consisted of six little girls. Among them was one deformed child, of whose age I could not judge, for suffering had made the face prematurely old, and the poor bent figure was no index of the years. I was not impressed pleasantly, at first, by this poor girl, whose features were heavy, and their expression dull; but, as I proceeded with the lesson, I found that she was the most intelligent pupil in the class. Those dark, sad eyes grew bright, as I spoke of the love that passeth knowledge. Those toil-hardened hands knew their way through the Book of God, and in almost every instance it was Katherine, the child of poverty and pain, who found the references first, whether they were in Isaiah or John.

She was a Hollander, and I shall never forget how luminous her face became when I asked her if such was not the fact. "I not speak English goot, I know," she said, smiling; "I only have been in this land tree years."

It is a very good test of familiarity with the Scriptures when one can readily turn to any portion of them. When I see a charming, bright-eyed girl looking for Hosea in the New Testament, or hunting up Leviticus among the Prophets, I am very much

afraid that her gilt-edged Bible is kept for show rather than for use. When a boy who is reading Virgil, and studying mathematics, does not know where to look for the Ten Commandments, and has to search all over the Gospels for the Lord's Prayer, I am fearful that his other studies are crowding out the best study in the world. I thought that the little Dutch girl might teach a lesson to many who are clothed in "purple and fine linen"—that one she had herself learned in Christ's school, "Search the Scriptures." — *Sunday-School Times.*

"DON'T YOU LOVE HIM FOR THAT, FATHER?"

One Sabbath evening, the father of two little children had placed one of them on each knee, to ask them what they had heard in the infant-school that day. He was not a professor of religion, although he had a pious wife. The little children began to tell him, in their own way, of the beautiful home in heaven that Jesus had left because of His love to men. Looking full in her father's face, the little girl said, "Jesus must have loved us very much to do that; don't you love Him for it, father?" They then went on describing the trials and sufferings of the Saviour, and she again asked the question, "Don't you love Him for that, father?" and when they spoke of His death on the Cross, the little one asked the third time, "Now, don't you love Him, father?" The father had to put the children down, and go out of the room to hide his emotion. He confessed to the writer afterwards, that he felt more under the artless questioning of his little children than he ever felt under the most powerful preaching in his life. He soon afterwards united with the Church of God.

Does *your* father love Jesus? Can you not ask him? Do you pray for him? Do you show by your life that *you* love the Saviour? — *Hammond's "Little Ones in the Fold."*

HOW THE CORDS OF LOVE MAY DRAW.

A lady was converted; her husband was opposed to religion; but he said to a friend, "My wife obeys me cheerfully in everything, except when she thinks her duty to God is concerned." The friend said, "I will lay you a wager that she would not obey you in such a case as this: you shall invite me and half a dozen more to sup with your wife at a very late hour, when you know she has retired to rest." "I take the bet," he said. The party arrived after midnight. He sent word to his wife that several friends had come to sup with him. She rose immediately, had the supper prepared, and received them kindly. The man who lost the wager said to her, "How could you keep your temper?" She answered, "Unless my husband's heart become changed, this is his only heaven; and, therefore, I wish to make it as happy to him as possible." When the husband heard it, he said, "This must be true religion," and he began to read, and think, and pray for himself; and God put a new spirit within him.

THE SCRIPTURE-TREASURY.

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

(Luke ii. 43—50.)

The words, "When they had fulfilled the days," imply that the parents of Jesus remained in Jerusalem until the close of the feast of unleavened bread. That feast being over, they set out on their return to Nazareth. Another company, probably of youths,

had set out before them; and, as Jesus had, perhaps, associated with these youths before, Joseph and Mary naturally supposed that He would be with them now, and therefore were not at all anxious respecting Him, though He was not under the immediate notice of their eye. But He tarried behind. Jerusalem and its Temple had attractions for Him of no ordinary kind; and, whilst His parents were again on the road to Nazareth, He was in one of the Temple-courts, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." Let us pause here, and try to realize the scene. These doctors were some of the Rabbis, or teachers, who were accustomed to sit in an apartment of the Temple, holding disputations concerning the law. They were not necessarily members of the Sanhedrim; but, in all probability, several of them were such. The title "Rabbi" only began to be used during the reign of Herod the Great; and took its rise in connexion with the two schools of Shammai and Hillel, between which there was much difference of opinion on questions of the most foolish kind. The Rabbis, among whom Jesus was found, were probably sitting in a room connected with the court of the women; for beyond that court females were not allowed to pass. It was next to the court of the Israelites, and was entered by one of those gates which stood respectively on the north, south, and east of the Temple.

How Jesus obtained access to the doctors we are not informed; but He may have been introduced by one of their number with whom He had previously engaged in conversation. And though, at this time, the disciples of the Rabbis usually *stood* when in their presence, Jesus was admitted to a seat among them; for, by His conversation and deportment, He had won their confidence, and gained their high esteem. It must not be supposed that He addressed them in a bold and domineering manner: "that," as Olshausen observes, "would have been an anomaly which the God of order would never have exhibited." No; but as a Child He heard them, and asked them questions. They were, perhaps, reading a roll of one of the books of Moses, or of the prophets, and giving their comments upon it; and Jesus listened, and then asked them for yet further light. In rightly asking questions the profoundest wisdom is frequently displayed: and the questions of Jesus related to none of the frivolous matters in dispute among these doctors, to none of the foolish traditions of their fathers; but were of so grave a nature as to excite the astonishment of all who heard them, and to lead them, in their turn, to ask questions of Him. Here the Gospel of the Infancy again obtrudes its follies, and says that one of the doctors asked Him if He had studied astronomy, and another if He was acquainted with philosophy and physics; on which He gave them the most wonderful replies! What a contrast to the beautiful simplicity of St. Luke! He says nothing as to what the questions were. Will it, then, be wrong in us to hazard a conjecture? May we not suppose that His questions related to the Messiah, and to the prophecies respecting Him found in the Psalms, Isaiah, and Daniel? This, surely, was one of the great themes which now began to occupy His deepest thoughts; and to learn the views of these Rabbis respecting Him "of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write," would, we conceive, be His earnest wish. Nor is there anything incredible in the fact that one so young should thus converse with these learned Rabbis. According to his own account of himself, Josephus was so precocious a youth, that, at the age of fourteen, he was frequently asked by the high priest and principal men

of the city his opinion on important points of the law. Is there any difficulty in admitting that Jesus was equally able to reply to the inquiries of these doctors, even though but twelve years of age?

Here, then, we picture to ourselves this Divine Child sitting in the midst of the Rabbis,—they on divans, or raised couches, He on a little stool, or on the ground. They are all distinguished by the over-garment of pure white linen, with fringes attached, called the "Talith;" and they have before them several rolls of parchment containing the Pentateuch, or some of the books of the prophets. Jesus is clad in the ordinary costume worn by boys of His age; and, with fixed eye, and beaming countenance, and noble mien, He listens to the conversations of these learned men. And He is with them, not one day only, but a second, and a third; so intent is He on the acquisition of knowledge, so absorbed is His mind in the questions which He hears discussed.

How His temporal wants were supplied during those three days we are not informed, nor where He lodged during those two nights: but probably one of these Rabbis would take Him to his house; for, as He had won their high esteem, they would all be disposed to treat Him kindly, and even deem it an honour to receive Him as a Guest.—*Smith's "Holy Child Jesus."*

ORIGINAL POETRY.

"PUT THY TRUST IN THE LORD."

CHILD of My love, "lean hard!" thy Father's hand
Will guide thee still, if thou but trust in Him.
I will direct thy path: at My command
Heaven's light shall guide thee when thy sight grows dim;
And when the burden seems too great to bear,
"As thy day is, even so thy strength shall be."
I will uphold thee with My tenderest care,
And guide thee still, if thou but trust in Me.
The trials which beset thee are to make
Thy faith and love like gold without alloy.
Pass through the furnace then! Thy Father's love,
For thy brief pain, shall give eternal joy:
"I will be with thee,"—and its fiercest flame
Shall but consume the dross. Thy soul shall rise
Above the things of earth, and boldly claim,
Through Jesu's blood, a mansion in the skies.

Yes! I will trust in Thee;
My father's God, and mine!
O, whisper unto me,
And tell me I am Thine!
Let Thy upholding Spirit bless,
And cheer me through life's wilderness.

Then, when this life is o'er,
And my last hour has come;
I, on that heavenly shore,
Shall find a blessed home:
From sin, and grief, and sorrow free,
With Christ to dwell eternally.

J. R. ROBINSON.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

September 13.—Sect. V., Quest. XV.

Grace Triumphant.

A pleasing testimony to the power of Divine grace was borne, one evening, in the Wynd Church, Glasgow. A man who had been long notorious as a transgressor of God's law, but had recently been made a partaker of the grace of God, rose and gave an account of himself, and of the Lord's goodness to him, such as melted the hearts of all present. He said, "I have been a poor drunkard, and an awful blasphemer of God's holy name; but I stand here a monument of God's mercy to sinners, of whom I am the very chief. I began to drink when I was very young, and for many a long year I never named my Maker but to curse. I have often been in bad company, but I never knew any one so bad as myself. Of forty of my old companions, only four are now living. I became wretched, and dreadfully afraid of dying. I resolved to change my life; so I joined the Temperance Society, but I did not then know how weak I was. I was at Satan's mercy. When I signed the pledge my heart did not go with my hand; I failed because I did not seek God's help. I at length cried to God to save me. God did it at once. I was saved by grace."

Sept. 20.—Sect. V., Quest. XVI.

Ensign Check.

During the Indian mutiny, the Sixth Regiment revolted at Allahabad, and murdered their officers. Ensign Check, a youth of sixteen, escaped in the dark to a neighbouring ravine. Here he found water; and, although desperately wounded, this water, without food, prolonged his life and sufferings during four long days and nights. Each night he contrived to raise himself, though with great difficulty, into a tree, as a refuge from troops of jackals. On the fifth day he was discovered in a dying state, and was dragged by the brutal Sepoys before one of their leaders, to receive sentence. There was another prisoner, a Christian catechist, formerly a Mohammedan, whom his tormentors were trying to terrify into a recantation. The youthful ensign cried aloud, "O, Padre, Padre, do not deny the Lord Jesus!" At this moment, Colonel Neile and the Madras Fusileers appeared. The Sepoys fled, and the life of the catechist was spared. The noble-hearted and godly lad had entered into the joy of his Lord.

Sept. 27.—Sect. V., Quest. XVII.

Four in the Morning.

A Sabbath-school teacher had felt an unusual concern for the salvation of the lads in his class. The solicitude of the teacher was rewarded by seeing several of the youths deeply convinced of their need of God's pardoning and renewing grace. They were so taught of the Holy Spirit as to perceive that true religion was indeed "the pearl of great price." They sought the blessing by earnest prayer. Sometimes they met each other for this purpose, and continued pleading with God for salvation so long as they could. It so happened that one of the lads was made happy in the love of God very late one Saturday night: it was quite time for him to go home, and so he went. But he was too happy to sleep much. The next morning he was up very early. He wanted to tell his teacher that he had received the blessing. He would meet his teacher when the school opened; but he could not wait until then. So at length he started for the teacher's house, and knocked the gentleman up. It was then four o'clock in the morning. It would seem strange, yet the teacher would be glad.

Oct. 4.—Sect. V., Quest. XVIII.

Wolf, or Bear?

During a revival of religion in the back settlements of Canada, an aged and respectable man became deeply impressed with his need of the great salvation. He read the Scriptures, and pleaded with God for mercy in his own dwelling. But he felt that it was right for him to seek the blessing in the outward means of grace also. The journeys required were lengthy, the roads rough, bears were not uncommon, and packs of wolves, at times, scoured the country. Still there was no great danger, if suitable precautions were used. The night on which the anxious inquirer found peace with God was a very blessed season to many. They sang, and prayed, and talked of God's love until it was very late. When at length the happy man did reach home, his wife was somewhat cross: "I was fearing," she said, "lest some hungry wolf had got hold of

you in that long swamp." "Nay," he replied, "the Lord has taken care of me. But I'll tell you, my wife, I have got rid of a bear this night that has been holding me these forty years."

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

Sept. 13.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. XIII.

Daily Wants.

A prophet fed.—During the time that Ahab was king of Israel a prophet of the Lord was directed to say to him, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." The name of that prophet? What would be the result of there being neither dew nor rain? Would Elijah himself be likely to suffer from the scarcity of food and water? Whither was Elijah directed to go? How was Elijah fed whilst at the brook Cherith? When the brook had dried up, whither was Elijah told to go? Was he to be sustained by a rich person? How did God provide for Elijah and the widow? (1 Kings xvii.)

A multitude fed.—The Lord Jesus had been preaching not far from the Lake of Gennesaret. All the day long the people had listened to His teaching. At eventide they were, no doubt, very hungry. Those who were feeble would be ready to faint. If these attempted to go to their homes without having partaken of food they might fall by the way. There were about five thousand men present. How many women and children would you suppose likely to be there? The Lord Jesus provided food for them all, by multiplying the provision which was at hand. How much was given to Christ? Who had carried it to the place? (Matt. xiv.; Mark vi.; Luke ix.; John vi.)

A nation fed.—How many years did the Israelites remain in the wilderness? How many men came out of Egypt? If there were six hundred thousand men capable of bearing arms, there must have been between two and three millions of people who needed food every day. Were there any corn-fields in the wilderness? Were there any corn-markets? If there were neither fields nor markets, how did the people obtain food? When the manna was given, were the people allowed to store it up in large quantities? (Exod. xvi. 14—36.) An important lesson. (Deut. viii. 3.)

EXERCISES.—Are our wants few or many? Can you mention some of them? Are we required to be industrious, that these may be supplied? Will industry avail without God's blessing? Can we make corn grow? On whom are all dependent for health?

Sept. 20.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. XIV.

God's Compassion towards us.

Learn the reply, leaving the texts for a future time. We may then profitably think of the pardoning mercy which we need from Almighty God. The debts we need to have forgiven are our sins.

We all need God's pardoning mercy.—The Lord Jesus speaks of a Pharisee who "went up into the Temple to pray;" yet, on his arrival there, boasted much, but asked for nothing. He told the Lord how much better he was than many other men; and, especially, how much holier he was than a repentant publican who happened to be standing at no great distance from him. Do you think that the Pharisee felt his need of mercy? Did he really need pardon? He regarded himself as just. Did God so regard him? We all have need to adopt the petition in the Lord's Prayer, of which we are now thinking, and the prayer of the Psalmist, in a text here appended, and the publican's cry. Why?

Without Christ none can obtain mercy.—Which of the Apostles were first put into prison after the ascension of their Lord? When Peter and John were placed before the Jewish rulers, after spending a night in gaol, they found themselves arraigned before the very men who had lately caused the death of the Lord Jesus. Peter spoke to these men concerning a precious stone, which God had in ancient times promised to provide, which had now been provided, but had been rejected by the Jews. Whom did Peter mean by "the stone set at nought of you builders?" What did he affirm concerning it? (Acts iv. 11, 12.)

Through Christ all may receive mercy.

—When the Saviour was speaking to Nicodemus, and explaining to that Jewish ruler how sinners might be saved, He compared Himself to something which Moses provided at the command of Almighty God. What was the object thus used as an illustration? When the "serpent of brass" had been made, were all welcome to look towards it? What happened when a wounded Israelite did look? Were all healed who looked? How are sinners to look to Jesus?

EXERCISES. — Who need God's pardoning mercy? Are there no exceptions? Can any of us be saved without Christ? What would happen if we were to pray, but determined not to submit to come through Christ? Will any be rejected who believe on Jesus?

Sept. 27.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. XIV.

(*Concluded.*)

Our Compassion towards Others.

Learn the appended verses. Then let us reflect concerning the forgiving spirit which we are required to cherish and manifest towards those who have injured us, or who we suppose have so done. We must not allow malice towards any to have a place within us.

The churlish villagers. — The Lord Jesus was going towards Jerusalem for the last time. The period was at hand when He must suffer and die for the sins of the world. Christ knew what He must endure, and when. But He did not shrink therefrom. "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." Because of His gracious teaching and miracles, He was generally readily welcomed by the poorer people; but when He wished to stay for a short time in one of the villages of Samaria, the inhabitants would not allow Him to do so. Why did they thus reject Him? It manifested great bigotry on their part so to hate the Jews, as to be unwilling that the Great Teacher should not tarry a short time among them because He was going to Jerusalem. Two of Christ's disciples asked power to punish these churlish villagers. In what manner did they wish to manifest their displeasure? What were the names of the two disciples? What was Christ's reply? (Luke ix. 51—56.)

The unmerciful servant.—Peter asked his Lord how often he ought to forgive one who offended him. Jesus replied, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." The Lord then spake a parable concerning "a certain king, which would take account of his servants." One of these servants was found indebted very largely to the king. What was the amount? Ten thousand talents, even of silver, is so large a sum, that we must suppose the servant to have been governor of a province who had kept back the revenue. How did the king treat him? A fellow-servant was in debt to the first-named. How much did he owe? How was he treated? (Matt. xviii. 23—35.)

EXERCISES.—Do people sometimes offend us without meaning to do so? Do wicked people often injure others purposely? Do we ever think ourselves wronged when such is not the case? Is it right to try to injure those who really have injured us? How should we treat them?

October 4.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. XV.

Screened from Temptation.

Carefully commit the reply to memory. The texts may be learned at a future time. We pray that, so far as is consistent with Divine Wisdom, we may be screened from the power of the adversary. If left to ourselves, we are very frail. It would be very lamentable if we were overcome, and led into sin. So we ask that no severer test shall be applied to our religion than God deems indispensable.

Temptation needlessly incurred.—Four cities were destroyed by fire in the days of Abraham. What were their names? We are told, "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." It must have been very undesirable to live near to such bad people. Abraham's nephew went to reside near Sodom. Why did he do so? (Gen. xiii. 10, 12.) Lot exposed himself and his family to many temptations because the country near Sodom abounded in rich pasturage.

Temptation resulting in loss.—Judas betrayed his Lord. Which of the twelve disciples denied Christ? Do you think that Peter intended to deny his Master several hours before he did it? Peter loved his Lord, and had proved faithful under ordinary temptation. Christ knew that His disciples were about to be exposed to very great danger, and directed them to "watch,

and pray," that they might overcome. Peter was too self-confident, and yielded to the adversary. (Matt. xxvi. 69—75.)

Temptation graciously modified. — When metals are placed in a crucible, and exposed to an intense heat, the intention is not that they should be injured, but purified. Some metals can endure a far greater heat than others. The refiner regulates the fire accordingly. So we are taught, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

Exercises.—Is it right needlessly to endanger our souls? Can you mention any ways in which people do so in these times? What shall we lose if we are overcome by temptation? Who guards His people when in danger?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Widow Goodwin.

It was a dark day to Sarah Goodwin when her husband died. They had lived in New York. Whilst her husband lived, there was abundant opportunity in that city for him to earn enough to support the family in comfort. But the case was sadly altered when the bread-winner was removed by death. The widow was left to support herself and her four little boys as she best could. The worthy woman did not yield to despair, nor waste her strength in repining. She looked up to God for help; and diligently toiled with her needle to gain food for herself and her children. Though they had no luxuries, they managed to get along with moderate comfort until Mrs. Goodwin was laid aside by a painful and protracted illness. When she recovered her health sufficiently to renew her efforts, she was in debt and great difficulty. Her troubles and difficulties increased, until she knew not how to satisfy the craving of hunger felt by herself and her children; nor how to induce her landlord to allow them to remain in the cottage they occupied. Whilst thus sorely harassed, Mrs. Goodwin found a purse of gold near the door of a large hotel. She could not avoid thinking, for a moment, how that money would supply the wants of her family, and help to apprentice her lads. But she would not yield to temptation, and at once sought out the owner. He spoke to her somewhat unkindly, and intimated that he supposed she would not have restored the purse had she not expected a handsome reward. Mrs. Goodwin ventured to give some little information concerning her difficulties; but the stranger merely said, "Ah, the old story again." He offered her a small silver coin, which she took, as it would provide bread for her poor boys' supper. The Lord, however, was about to furnish her more amply. Next morning a parcel was brought to her house, containing fifty dollars, (about £10,) and several articles of value. Mrs. Goodwin hastened to the hotel where the stranger was staying. When she arrived, a carriage was at the door; inside was the stranger. Mrs. Goodwin wanted to speak to him; but he merely smiled on her kindly, and the carriage drove away. She never was able to ascertain his name, though his appearance was somewhat remarkable because of his flowing hair. No doubt he was kind and wealthy, and wished to relieve those who were worthy of help. Widow Goodwin, however, knew that her Heavenly Father had thus given to her "daily bread" for herself and her four lads. (No. II. *September* 13.)

Africaner.

In the early part of this century there was an African chief of more than ordinary ferocity. He would not only plunder and murder any colonist who came in his way, and the people belonging to tribes hostile to his own, but found pleasure in tormenting and destroying when there was no apparent motive for so doing. His deeds of barbarity were countless. The British Government offered a reward of one thousand rix-dollars (about £175) for his head. Had he then been captured, he would, doubtless, have been hanged as an infamous murderer; and all people throughout the colony would have regarded his execution as a relief. The grace of God, however, reached the heart of this poor, miserable, and cruel wretch. He was saved from his sins. It was a long time before people could be made to believe that Africaner had become a real Christian. One day a Missionary, with some attendants, was staying a few hours with a Dutch farmer, and the Missionary mentioned the change in Africaner. The Boer could not credit the statement for some time. But he was at length convinced, because he knew the Missionary to be truthful. "Well," said he, "that is the eighth wonder of the world. When you return, I will go with you on purpose to see him. He murdered my uncle. But you say he is a Christian: I must see this marvel." The Missionary pointed to a

native who had accompanied him. "That is Africaner!" So it was! The man who had been a terror to the country, was now with the Missionary; but not generally made known, lest some, whose relatives he had slain, might assemble to kill him. When Africaner was dying, he said, "My former life is stained with blood; but Jesus Christ has pardoned me, and I am going to heaven." (No. II. *September* 20.)

"Jim Dick."

When Mr. Robert Southey (for some time the Poet-Laureate) was a lad at school, he and his schoolfellows took delight in teasing a youth of colour. Mr. Southey himself records their thoughtless unkindness. Generally the object of their scorn was known as "Jim Dick;" but often the lads, when disposed for what they called fun, would call him "Negro," "Blackamoor," and similar names. Jim was deeply pained, yet endeavoured to bear their ill-usage with meekness. One day in winter the lads agreed to have a slide on the ice; and, as the day was fine and the frost intense, they anticipated much pleasure. Robert Southey, however, was in a fix. His skates had been broken, and he had neglected to have them repaired. What could be done? It would be in vain to apply to any other lad. Every one was intent on enjoying this famous opportunity. "Jim Dick" had a pair. When asked, he at once lent them. After a capital slide, Southey took the skates back to Jim with many thanks. He never forgot the gentle look of the coloured lad as, in a soft tone, and with tears in his eyes, he said, "Master Robert, please do not call me 'Blackamoor.'" Never again did Southey use any scornful epithet to Jim. (No. II. *September* 27.)

Buried Alive.

About the period that Englishmen shook off the heavy yoke of Romanism, their fellow-Protestants in that part of Europe known as "the Low Countries" suffered most horrible persecutions. The Romanists, and especially the Jesuits, were infuriated at those who read the Bible for themselves, and held fast the truths they learned from God's Book. Two ladies were so intimidated, that they consented to deny their faith, and go to the idolatrous mass. But it was discovered that Anna, their servant-maid, still had a Bible, and read it. Anna was tried, and condemned to be buried alive. She was taken, one fine summer morning, to a meadow, and made to leap into a pit which had been dug. When this was filled up to her waist, deliverance was offered if she would recant. As she refused, she was covered up, and so murdered. We may lawfully pray that, if God's will, we may be screened from such a fearful test. (No. II. *October* 4.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

September 6.—The Power of God's Word.

Psalm xxxiii. 9: "He spake, and it was done."

1. *How man works.*—When men wish to build a house, or a ship, or to do any work, they have to gather materials with which to make it, and tools with which to work, and to put forth much labour for a long time. And no *one* man can do such a work alone. Some must plan the work, and think how it shall be done; others must labour in many ways; and if the work be great, much thought and many hands will be needed to do it. Then, too, it often happens that mistakes are made, and the work is spoilt, or it is not exactly the thing that was wanted; and, however strong, how quickly the works of man perish! Besides, many things are beyond the power and skill of man. Could any number of men make a mountain, or a river, or a tree, or fill up the smallest sea on the face of the earth?

2. *How God works.*—The first chapter in the Bible tells much about this. It speaks of a time when there was neither sun, nor star, nor earth; before cloud, or tree, or man, or any living thing was made; and it tells how all these were formed,—"by the word of the Lord" alone: "For He spake, and it was done." How great the power of such a word! "God said, Let there be light: and there was light." "The heavens," and "all the host of them," "the sea, and all that therein is," were alike brought into being by "the breath of His word." "And the Lord saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." Nothing of all this to alter or improve! How different is this from the work of man! Different

in *what* is done, as well as in the way of doing it.

3. *How we should think of God.*—For His great power and wisdom, "Let all the earth fear the Lord," and "stand in awe of Him." Do all men do this? How many care nothing for His word, and His day, and His house! Yet we are all "the creatures of His hands." Do you fear Him? Then, too, we should *praise* God, for "the earth is full of His goodness." Let us *show* forth our gratitude to Him for His great mercy, and trust in Him at all times.

REVISION.—What have you learnt about the difference between God's work and man's work? What kind of Word is God's? What shows its great power? How ought you to think of God? Why should you praise God?

Sept. 13.—Lessons from the Rock.

EXOD. xvii. 1: "There was no water for the people to drink."

1. *Distress.*—The Israelites were now in "the great and terrible wilderness," which lay between Egypt and the land of Canaan. They had been brought out of Egypt; Pharaoh, their cruel enemy, was dead; the Red Sea had been safely crossed, and manna was sent from heaven to supply their lack of bread. They were in the right way, for they had followed the "pillar of cloud;" yet, when they came to Rephidim, "there was no water for the people to drink." The great multitude—men, women, and children, with their cattle and sheep—"thirsted there for water," but could find none. This was indeed a sad distress; it seemed as though all must perish. Now was the time for them to remember their former deliverance.

2. *Murmuring.*—Instead of trusting in the power and kindness of God, which had helped them before, "the people did chide with Moses," and "murmured against" him, and were even "almost ready to stone" him. This was great folly as well as great sin. Was Moses able to help their trouble? He had led them as God commanded, and was now sharing their distress. Yet they did not consider this, nor how God had often helped them before. Many now act like the Israelites. In time of trouble they do not trust in God, or seek His help; but are full of fretfulness and murmurings, and cast blame on those about them.

3. *Deliverance.*—God was ready as ever to hear the prayer of His servant, and to send help. He told Moses to take with him some "of the elders of the people" to the rock of Horeb, and to smite it with his rod, and that water should come out for the people to drink. Moses did this in presence of the elders; and as he smote the rock there flowed out of it an abundant stream of pure, fresh water; and their distress was over. Learn, now,—

4. *Lessons from the rock.*—(1.) The value of prayer. Let us not murmur at trials, but pray to God for His aid. "Call on Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." (2.) How easily God can remove the greatest troubles! (3.) It may make us think of the "living water" which cometh down from heaven. Without this *souls* must perish for ever. What is that "living water?" How may it be had?

REVISION.—Why were the people in such distress? What did they do? Why was this wrong? How were they delivered? What should this teach us?

Sept. 20.—Children for Jesus.

LUKE i. 66: "The hand of the Lord was with him."

1. *The angel's message.*—Zacharias was a priest at Jerusalem, "righteous before God." What does that mean? He prayed that he might have a son who should grow up to be a servant of the Lord. Do you remember another child whose mother prayed for him in the same way? As Zacharias was one day alone in the service of the temple, an angel appeared near the altar. Zacharias was full of fear at this sight; but the angel said he had come from God, to tell him that his prayer was heard, and that he should have a son who should bring him "joy and gladness." But how was this to be? By his becoming rich, or getting fame among men? No. Far better; He should "turn" "many of the children of Israel" to "the Lord their God," and "make ready a people prepared for the Lord." These were glad tidings for Zacharias. A good father can have no greater joy than that his son should grow up to love and serve God.

2. *The infant John.* — People had heard of the angel's visit, and of what he had said. Other wonders, too, had happened. Zacharias had been dumb from the time the angel came, till after his little boy was born; then God gave him power to speak. The neighbours wondered and feared, when they heard these things, and they said, "What manner of child shall this be?" God had chosen him to a great work, and "the hand of the Lord was with him." He took care of him; and, as he grew up, He made him wise, and filled his heart with the Holy Spirit. This child became John the Baptist. Do you know anything about him? and where and how he lived? and what he did? He became a great preacher, and taught the people to repent of their sins, and to prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

3. *Children for Christ.*—Parents and friends ask anxiously about you, "What manner of child shall this be?" The Lord Jesus wants your heart, and your service. Satan, too, will strive to have you. Which master will you choose? There may not be such honour for you as for John, but the work may be the same. God will fit you for it; His hand will be upon you for good. He has often chosen children for His work: Samuel, John, Timothy, and many others.

Revision.—Who was Zacharias? What had he prayed for? What message did the angel bring him? What question did the people ask about John? Why was Zacharias glad? How may you make glad your parents' hearts? How may we know that God will accept the service of children?

Sept. 27.—**Help.**

Exod. xviii. 4: "The God of my father was mine help."

1. *Moses in need of help.* — When Moses left Egypt the first time, he knew not where to go. He had slain an Egyptian who was doing wrong to an Israelite, and when Pharaoh heard of this, he sought to kill him. So Moses fled in fear, and wandered into the land of Midian, and dwelt with Jethro, a priest of that land. He was a stranger there; but Jethro showed him much kindness, and gave him his daughter to be his wife. Moses knew that it was God who had preserved and cared for him, and he wished to have ever before him some mark or sign by which this mercy and goodness should be always kept in mind.

2. *Moses' sign.*—He named one of his sons Eliezer, which means, "My God is a help;" for he said, "The God of my father was mine help." The Israelites often chose names in this way, as tokens of something to be remembered. It was so with the name of Moses himself. Do you know its meaning? and who gave it him? and why? Thus, every time Moses heard his son's name, he would be reminded of God's kind help in his time of need.

3. *All may find help in God.*—We all need help. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." No one of us has wisdom or strength enough for the needs of life; but we may get all we want from God. He has promised to give to them that ask Him. Moses had been taught to do this when a child, and so he says, "The God of *my father*." Happy are those children who are taught to trust in the God of their father.

4. *We should acknowledge the help which God has given us.*—Moses did this by the name Eliezer. It was good for himself, and for others too. David said, "I will pay my vows *in the presence of all His people*." Let us *show forth* His praise in our words, and in our life, then "many shall see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord."

Revision.—When was Moses in need of help? How did he get it? How did he keep it in mind? How may we get help? How may we acknowledge it? Why should we show forth the praise of God?

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.—No. II.

The names of these children, when placed in a row,
The much-honour'd name of their father will show:
Before on his death-bed that patriarch lay,
He uttered some prophecies; then pass'd away.

"Both patient and strong thou shalt be in thy day;
Thy shoulder shall bow,—thou a tribute shalt pay."

"In secret thou fiercely on crime didst decide;
In Israel I'll scatter, in Jacob divide."

"My firstborn thou art, but thou hast not done well;
Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."

"A blessing shall rest on the fruits of thy field;
The portion thou hast, royal dainties shall yield."

"My own thou art not, but as mine thou shalt be;
The name of my fathers shall now be on thee."

"So fierce was thine anger, so cruel thy deed;
In days that are coming I'll scatter thy seed." H.

BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

73. In which of Paul's Epistles does he speak of the treatment he received at Philippi, as "shameful?"

74. Luke mentions an important fact respecting the baptism of our Saviour, which the other Evangelists have omitted. What is it?

75. What Jewish feast was established by Queen Esther?

76. How long were Nehemiah and his friends in building the wall of Jerusalem?

77. How old was Jacob when Joseph stood before Pharaoh?

78. Which Psalm gives information respecting the treatment Joseph received in prison?

H.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

"NOT AFRAID TO DIE."

A FEW years ago one of our Sabbath-schools in the north of England numbered amongst its scholars a girl then about thirteen years of age; she had long been a constant attendant, was obedient to her teacher, and very attentive. About this time a good work was going on; many of the scholars became convinced of sin, and sought and found pardon. Happily she was of that number, and obtained salvation, to the joy of her soul.

Not long after she found the Saviour, that fatal malady consumption was permitted to seize her as its victim. While health and opportunity permitted, it was her delight to attend school and chapel. She gave pleasing evidence to her teacher of a change of heart; and when prostrated on her death-bed, she calmly endured her sufferings.

When God called her to meet Him, she cheerfully obeyed the summons. Though young in years, she was prepared to die. During her illness she was frequently visited by the Superintendent of the school, her teacher, and other friends; and to all she expressed herself as being very happy in her Saviour's love, and ready, "in His arms," to "expire." She said "God had given her a new heart," and she was "not afraid to die." A few days before her death, on being left alone without a light, she observed she had not been in the dark, a glorious light had filled the room. On the last day of her life she said to a friend, who called to see her, "I shall die to-night," and asked her to pray; for prayer was her constant delight. Her last words were expressive of peace; and shortly

after, without a struggle, she fell asleep in Jesus.

"Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features fair and thin;
And softly from that hush'd and darken'd room
Two angels issued, where but one went in."

Teachers! work on zealously for Christ, for your labour is not in vain. You are educating the souls of those committed to your care for eternity. The lessons you teach them are in many instances imprinted on their minds, and leave impressions for good which will never be removed. Grow not weary in this work of faith and labour of love; retire not from the ranks in despondency: rather, rest not satisfied until your scholars can each say, "I am not afraid to die." For in such an hour as we think not, we may be called to read the secrets of eternity.

R. B. C.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

LETTER FROM THE LATE REV. WILLIAM NAYLOR IN RELATION TO THE ORIGIN OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS, &c.

[The appended communication will be read with interest. It bears date October 7th, 1867, and was addressed to the Editor of this periodical. Mr. Naylor was at once earnestly requested to furnish the facts proffered in it, and purposed to do so, as he states in a second note, sent in reply to one asking if the paper was in progress. But death has deprived us of the interesting narrative for which we had hoped; and which, had life and health permitted, Mr. Naylor had such ample means to supply. We can only hope that he has left in manuscript some available records of the facts and incidents to which reference is made in the subjoined letter.]

"Dear Brother,

"I see in the 'Sunday-School Magazine' for this month, [October, 1867,] page 223, that it is still stated that Mr. Raikes was the originator of Sunday-schools in England. This is not correct. In a lecture on 'Meditations in Methodism,' I show from printed documents that they existed in Methodism eleven [or four*] years before Mr. Raikes took interest in them. Honour to whom honour is due. I give Mr. Raikes credit for extending them, and bringing public attention to them, but they had their origin in Methodism.

"In the same lecture I also show that our Tract Society was formed in 1782, seventeen years before the 'Religious Tract Society;' also, that that blessing of our country and others, 'The Benevolent Society,' began in Methodism. I have a copy of a letter written on the subject by Mr. Wesley, giving an account of his subscription of one guinea, [per annum?] and threepence a week.

"Why should not the present generation of Methodists be made acquainted with these facts? I would willingly draw them up for one of your interesting publications, if you think with me. If not, I shall insert them in a work I have commenced, to be designated, 'Naylorian Anecdotes: chiefly original, carefully collected and classified.' This will depend on my life being yet lengthened. I have anecdotes of Mr. Wesley no one can give but myself. Though young at the time, I knew him, heard him, and was introduced to him.

"In reference to Sunday-schools, at times I think I may be the oldest scholar. Seventy-seven years ago I

* The figures are indistinct.

was one, and have a Bible then given to me by a Minister for committing to memory the first chapter of the Book of Proverbs.

"Praying you may have a prosperous, useful, happy year,

"I am yours affectionately,

"WILLIAM NAYLOR."

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The Holy Child Jesus; or, The Early Life of Christ. Viewed in Connexion with the History, Chronology, and Archæology of the Times. By the REV. THORNLEY SMITH. Pp. 231. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.—No attempt is made in this book to extend the limits of information as to the early history of Jesus, by adding and claiming authenticity for other facts than those supplied by the Gospel narratives. Mr. Smith has contented himself with the more thankworthy endeavour to elucidate what the Evangelists briefly tell; to protect readers from misleading theories as to their meaning; to elaborate the settings of familiar facts, and thus to heighten the interest with which they are contemplated; and to guide thoughtful readers to correct conclusions upon various questions which cannot but arise as they peruse the opening chapters of the Gospels. Upon the execution of this design the writer has expended much painstaking, care, and judgment; and the result is a very pleasant and useful volume.

Memorials of the Life of Peter Böhler, Bishop of the Church of the United Brethren. By the REV. J. P. LOCKWOOD. With an Introduction by the REV. THOMAS JACKSON. Pp. 142. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.—This book presents such facts as diligent and able research can obtain in reference to the ancestry, education, conversion, character, evangelical labours, travels, and death of Peter Böhler. It is a history of which no Methodist should be ignorant, and in which all may be interested and profited. What services this good man rendered to John and Charles Wesley by the "counsel which led to their spiritual emancipation, and to the truly evangelical character of their ministry," the reader is enabled to see clearly, and to appreciate justly, by a most valuable and instructive sketch of the early religious views, practices, and difficulties of the two brothers, supplied by the pen of the Rev. Thomas Jackson.

Gathered Lilies: A Bereaved Mother's Memorial of Four lovely Children. Edited, with an Introduction, by GEORGE OSBORN, D.D. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.—A fourfold and beautiful, but brief, sketch, which shows how, through the grace of Jesus, the riches of the Holy Spirit may abound towards children in all wisdom and goodness.

The New Lesson-Book for Sunday-Schools. Fifty-two Lessons on BIBLE-HISTORY, arranged in Accordance with the Appendix to the Second Catechism of the Wesleyan Methodists. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.—A companion-book to that on SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES noticed and recommended in our May Number. The two books form a most valuable contribution to the equipment of Sunday-schools for their proper work; and we trust they will speedily come into very extensive use.

The Sunday-School Senior Class. By J. A. COOPER, F.R.S.L. London: Sunday-School Union.—This is a revised edition of an Essay to which the Sunday-School Union adjudged their first prize. It abounds with practical and excellent suggestions in relation to the formation and conduct of senior classes, and plans for promoting the religious and general improvement of senior scholars and for making them serviceable to the schools to which they belong. Conductors of such classes, and Superintendents wishful to arrange for them, will find valuable aid in its pages.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

Lead them to Thee!

LEAD them, my God, to Thee,
Lead them to Thee;
E'en these dear babes of mine
Thou gavest me:
O, by Thy love Divine,
Lead them, my God, to Thee,
Safely to Thee!

What though my faith is dim,
Wavering and weak?
Yet still I come to Thee,
Thy grace to seek.
Daily to plead with Thee,
Lead them, my God, to Thee,
Safely to Thee!

When earth looks bright and fair,
Festive and gay,
Let no delusive snare
Lure them astray:
But from temptation's power
Lead them, my God, to Thee!
Safely to Thee!

E'en for such little ones
Christ came a child,
And through this world of sin
Moved undefiled:
O, for His sake, I pray,
Lead them, my God, to Thee,
Lead them to Thee!

Yes, though my faith be dim,
I would believe
That Thou this precious gift
Wilt now receive:
O, take their young hearts now!
Lead them, my God, to Thee,
Safely to Thee!

Lead them, my God, to Thee,
Lead them to Thee!
Though 'twere my dying breath,
I'd cry to Thee,
With yearning agony,
Lead them, my God, to Thee,
Lead them to Thee!

Artless Simplicity.

A LADY visited New-York city, and saw on the side-walk a ragged, cold, and hungry little girl gazing wistfully at some of the cakes in a shop-window. She stopped, and, taking the little one by the hand, led her into the store. Though she was aware that bread might be better for the cold child than cake, yet, desiring to gratify the shivering and forlorn one, she bought, and gave her the cake she wanted. She then took her to another place, where she procured her a shawl and other articles of comfort. The grateful little creature looked the benevolent lady full in the face, and, with artless simplicity, said, "Are you God's wife?" Did the most eloquent speaker ever employ words to better advantage?

On being "instant in Prayer."

DOES it at times seem as if there were no hope of our prayers being answered? Let not the well-known fable of the crow and the pitcher be too familiar not to furnish us with a useful lesson of encouragement. The crow, ready to die with thirst, flew to a pitcher, which it saw at a distance. But, when he came to it, he found the water so low, that, with all his stooping and straining, he was unable to taste a drop. Thereupon he tried to break the pitcher; then to overturn it: but his strength was not sufficient to do either. At last, seeing some small pebbles at hand, he dropped a good many of them, one by one, into the pitcher; and so raised the water to the brim, and quenched his thirst. So may it be with our prayers. Every pebble we cast in, to adapt the figure, may bring the water of life nearer to our thirsting lips. The Lord may desire us first to feel the cravings of desire and want, He may lead us to patient continuance in the use of means; but every effort brings the blessing nearer, until, in time, the thirsting soul is fully satisfied, and the needed measure of our prayers is full.

The Cobbler's good Conscience.

SOME few years ago I was brought into contact with a coloured working man. He was only a cobbler; he said himself he was not a decent shoemaker. But, if his work was not elegantly done, it was thoroughly done, and that was the point. He told me that when he became too old and crippled to work in the field and house, he took to cobbling. I said to him, "My friend, after this cobbling on earth has done, how about that other world? Have you any hope for that better world?" "Ah! master," said he, "I am nothing, as I told you, but a poor cobbler; but I feel, when I sit here, and work at my stool, that the Good Master is looking at me, and when I take a stitch, it is a stitch; and when I put on a heel-top, it is not paper, but good leather." It is not the work we do upon earth that makes the upshot of life, but it is the way in which we do that work—it is the motive, "Thou God seest me."

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

AUGUST 30.—Afternoon Lesson.

"What is this?"—Exodus xvi. 9—36.

For repetition, verses 28—30.

Summary.—God provides meat and manna for the murmuring Israelites. Every one obtains enough, and no one has anything to spare. A double supply is sent for the Sabbath; and a pot of manna is preserved in the ark.

I. Meat and Manna for Murmurers.—V. 9—15. Aaron announces to the Israelites that, notwithstanding their *murmurings*, God would, in the evening, give them flesh to eat, and in the morning cause it to rain down bread from heaven. While he is speaking, their attention is directed *toward the wilderness*, (v. 10,) where *the glory of the Lord* flashes out from *the cloud*, attesting the truth of the words of reproof and promise to which they are listening. Accordingly, that evening, a flock of *quails*, probably from the neighbourhood of the Nile, *came up, and covered the camp;* i. e., fell down in the midst of the camp, weary with their flight; and, in the morning, when the mist that produced *the dew* had cleared away, it left behind it the *bread* God had provided for His people. *Manna*,—i. e., "What is this?" (Margin.)

II. "No Lack," and "Nothing over."—V. 16—21. To teach the people the duty of trusting in the Lord, Moses gave them two commands: they were only to gather sufficient for the wants of a single day; and they were not to leave any from one day to another. There were some who disobeyed both these orders; but the result was in each case disappointing. They who by their greater strength and extra exertions gathered more than they needed for the day's consumption, found, to their mortification, on measuring their stock, that they had no overplus: and they who, in unbelieving carefulness, kept a portion till the next day, found it to be corrupt, and wholly unfit for use.

III. A Double Supply.—V. 22—30. *On the sixth day* they discovered, to their surprise, that each person had gathered a double quantity. The explanation given by Moses is very instructive. The consecration of the seventh day as a day of religious rest, (Gen. ii. 1—3,) which had probably been neglected in Egypt, was now to be restored. The double quantity collected on the sixth day, was a fresh intimation that the seventh day should be kept holy unto the Lord. There were some who disregarded this command also. They went out to collect manna on the Sabbath, but found none; whereupon God solemnly reproved them, and commanded them to remain quietly at home on the seventh day.

IV. The Pot of Manna.—V. 31—36. As a memorial for future years, Moses caused an *omer* full of this "bread from heaven" to be *laid up before the Testimony;* i. e., in the ark, which contained the two tables of the law. This, however, was done afterwards. Compare Heb. ix. 4. An "omer" was a small vessel, forming part of the furniture of every house, and being always of about the same size, it served for a measure. The *ephah* contained three pecks and three pints.

Reflections.—1. *God gives us our daily bread.*—Because He gives it, we are taught to pray for it, Matt. vi. 11. See Ps. xxxvii. 3; Prov. xxx. 8.

2. *Though God supplies our daily bread, we are daily to labour for it.*—The Israelites had to gather up the manna; and, see Exod. xx. 9; Ps. civ. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 10.

3. *They who attend faithfully to their daily duties, may leave the future to God.*—The Israelites, in gathering manna,

were to "take no thought for the morrow;" and see Matt. vi. 34.

4. *God has given one day in seven for holy rest.*—A precious gift this is! What a weariness, especially to the poor, would life be without it. The Israelites were forbidden to gather manna on the Sabbath; nor must we, on the Lord's day, follow any worldly calling.

5. *The bestowal of bread is a mercy to be remembered.*—Hence the preservation of the golden pot of manna. Jacob in his old age acknowledged the God who had "fed" him all his days. See Gen. xlviii. 15. We should do the same.

6. *Jesus is "the true Bread from heaven."*—"Lord, evermore give us THIS bread!" See John vi. 27, 32—35.

QUESTIONS.—For what did the Israelites murmur? What did they see "toward the wilderness?" What "flesh" was provided for them? What "bread?" What did they call the latter? Why? What was it like? How much was each man to gather? How were they disobedient? What was the result? What happened on the sixth day? Why? What was preserved? how? where? why?

Illustrations.—I. QUAILS.

See v. 13. "According to many accounts, both ancient and modern, quails (*Tetrao coturnix*) are found in immense numbers in Arabia Petræa, and the adjoining countries. They generally fly very low, a yard or two above the ground, and in such dense masses, that the inhabitants catch great numbers in their hands, or knock them down with sticks."—*Kurtz.*

II. MANNA.

See v. 15. The Bible gives the following particulars about it: God rained it "from heaven," v. 4; it fell with the dew, at "night," Num. xi. 9; it lay on the ground like "hoar frost," v. 14; it was white, "like coriander-seed," and tasted like cake and honey, v. 31; it was like "bdellium," a transparent gum, or resin, Num. xi. 7. It supplied the place of bread, and the people ground it in mills, or crushed it in mortars, and then boiled it, and made cakes of it. Of the quantity which fell we may form some idea by remembering that every Israelite, in the wilderness, got five pints a day for forty years.

SEPTEMBER 6.—MORNING LESSON.

"REJOICE IN THE LORD."—Psalm xxxiii.

For repetition, verses 18—20.

SUMMARY.—God is to be praised for His goodness, power, and providence; and confidence is to be placed in Him.

I. FOR HIS GOODNESS.—V. 1—5. *Comely*, —i. e., beautiful, becoming, proper. *The Lord* has done much *for the upright*, and *praise* becomes them. *With harp*, &c.—God is infinitely glorious, and cannot be praised enough. Let instruments of music assist the voice. *A new song*,—a song which springs up new from the heart. God's mercies are ever new: let them inspire new songs. See Ps. xcvi. 1; xcviii. 1; Rev. v. 9. *The word of the Lord is right*, &c.—His word is true, and what He promises, He certainly performs. *He loveth*, &c.—He is always ready to right those who are wronged, and delights to do it.

II. FOR HIS POWER.—V. 6—11. God is just and good, as we have seen; but is He mighty? can He comfort, and prosper, and deliver His people? The Psalmist here shows that He can. He is ALMIGHTY; for by His *word* He made *the heavens* and all their *host*—sun, moon, and stars. Furthermore, He brought the great mass of waters together, like a *heap* of solid materials, and placed them within bounds, like treasures in a *storehouse*. He is, therefore, worthy of holy *fear* and *awe*, or reverence. He had but to *speak*, and all this *was done;* and is He not able to support a "worm?" See Isai. xli. 14. It is an easy matter for such a Being to *bring to nought* the proud counsel of men, while His own *counsel* is eternal, and never can be frustrated.

III. FOR HIS PROVIDENCE.—V. 12

—19. *Blessed is the nation*, &c.—This is deduced from what goes before, and confirmed by what follows. The *looking* of the Lord *from heaven* is the act of a King and a Judge. He made all men *alike*,—i.e., with similar powers, faculties, passions, &c.; and *He considereth*, approvingly, or disapprovingly, *all their* works. *No king*, &c.—God's kingdom is over all, and all events are subject to His decision. *Behold, the eye*, &c.—What the *host* of a *king*, and the *strength* of the *mighty man*, and the swiftness of the *horse* cannot effect, is accomplished for God's people by the loving care of His providence.

IV. TRUST IN HIM.—V. 20 — 22. *Waiteth*, &c.—Compare Gen. xlix. 18; Deut. xxxiii. 26 *For our heart*, &c.—Trust in God brings constant rejoicing. *According as*, &c.—Faith, being the condition of our obtaining *mercy*—when faith is present, mercy is at hand.

REFLECTIONS. — 1. *Praise is* NOT *comely for the unrighteous.*—To them the glory of the Lord is no object of joy and gratitude, but of terror and aversion. They do not want Him to be either faithful or almighty. "The praises of hypocrites are awkward and uncomely, like 'a parable in the mouth of fools,' Prov. xxvi. 7."—*Henry.*

2. *God is good to all.*—"What pity is it that this earth, which is so full of God's goodness, should be so empty of His praises; and that, of the multitudes that live upon His bounty, there are so few that live to His glory!"—*Henry.*

3. *God is the Governor of the world.*—The result of everything depends upon Him. If the issue of our struggles with the world, the flesh, and the devil depended on human strength, we should be overcome; but, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31.

QUESTIONS.—Why is praise "comely for the righteous?" In whom is it not "comely?" why? Why should God be praised with instruments? Why with "a new song?" Why "skilfully?" How is His goodness shown? His power? His providence? What should all this lead us to do?

Illustration.—SKILFUL PRAISE.

See v. 3. "Let *sense* and *sound* accompany each other; let the style of the music be suited to the words. This *skill* is possessed by few singers. They can make a *loud noise*, but they cannot adapt *sound* to *sense.*—*Dr. Adam Clarke.*

SEPTEMBER 6.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE CRUCIFIXION.—Mark xv. 22—47.

SUMMARY.—Jesus is crucified between two thieves, and insulted as He hangs upon the cross; He dies, and a Roman officer believes on Him; He is watched by a number of pious women standing at a distance; Joseph begs His body, and buries it.

I. CRUCIFIED.—V. 22—26. *Golgotha*,—called also "Calvary," Luke xxiii. 3. The two words have the same meaning. It was the place where criminals were executed. *Wine mingled with myrrh*,—a stupefying potion, administered to criminals before they were crucified, to deaden pain. *He received it not.*—He came into the world purposely to suffer for our sins; He was to tread "the winepress alone," Isai. lxiii. 3; and He was, therefore, resolved to bear the full pain. See John xviii. 11. *Parted His garments.*—It thus appears that the clothes of criminals were then, as they are now, claimed by the executioners. See Ps. xxii. 18. *The third hour*,—nine in the morning. *The superscription of His accusation.*—The inscription over the head of a criminal, stated the crime for which he died. Jesus was crucified on the false charge of treason. He was, indeed, a KING; but not, as was alleged, in opposition to Cæsar.

II. REVILED. — V. 27 — 32. *Two thieves.*—A third thief should have suffered with them; but Barabbas was released, that Jesus might take his place. See John xviii. 39, 40. *The Scripture.* — Isai. liii. 12. *Wagging their heads*,—saying insulting things, and proving the sincerity of their malice by corresponding gestures. *Ah, Thou that*, &c.—This was a malicious

misapplication of our Lord's words, John ii. 19. *Also the chief priests.*—Not content with the life of their Victim, they stood by His cross, to add to His shame by cruel taunts and reproaches. *Let Christ*, &c.—Let Him use this opportunity to show that He is what He professes to be! *And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him;*—but one of them saw his error, repented, obtained mercy, and went with Jesus to paradise. See Luke xxiii. 39—43.

III. EXPIRING.—V. 33—38. *The sixth hour*,—twelve o'clock. *Darkness*,—a supernatural darkness, by which God attested the Divine Sonship of the innocent Sufferer. *The ninth hour*,—three o'clock. *Why hast Thou forsaken Me?*—Why dost Thou leave Me now without aid and consolation? This was "the power of darkness," Luke xxii. 53; and Christ was now, in some peculiar manner, left to the malice of Satan. Whatever was the suffering which prompted this bitter cry, we know that it was endured on OUR account. *He calleth Elias.*—This was said in derision. They made use of the resemblance between *Eloi* and *Elias*, to intimate that this mock-Messiah was calling for His harbinger. *A sponge full of vinegar.*—Of this Jesus partook, John xix. 29, 30. What is here called vinegar was, probably, the drink of the soldiers; and it must not be confounded with the drugged beverage which Jesus refused to drink, v. 23. *Gave up the ghost*,—voluntarily resigned the life which no man could take from Him, John x. 17, 18. *The veil*,—which separated the holy place from the most holy. The rending of the veil was miraculous, and emblematical of the admission of the Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGED.—V. 39—41. *The centurion.*—The Roman officer who superintended the crucifixion. *Truly this Man was the Son of God.*—The centurion had heard Jesus so describe Himself before Pilate, and he now thought God was manifesting His displeasure on account of the murder of His Son. *There were also women.*—These female followers of Jesus displayed steadfast devotion to their Master, when the Apostles themselves had fled. They stood *afar off*, because, no doubt, the soldiers forbade them to come nearer. Some of them were wealthy, and they all had, more or less, *ministered* to Jesus; and, notwithstanding the insults to which they were exposed, there they were to honour Him to the last. *James the less*,—i. e., the younger, Matt. x. 3.

V. BURIED.—V. 42—47. *The day before the Sabbath*,—i. e., Friday evening. *An honourable counsellor*,—a member of the supreme court of the nation. *Waited for*, &c.—expected the Messiah's coming. *Boldly*,—though before he had been afraid to acknowledge Jesus, John xix. 38. Now that Jesus had DIED for him, he was ashamed of his cowardice. *Craved the body of Jesus*,—to save Him from a dishonourable grave. *Pilate marvelled.*—Persons crucified commonly lingered much longer. *Laid Him in a sepulchre*,—which he had intended for himself, Matt. xxvii. 60.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Be patient under provocation.*—If you sincerely endeavour to serve God, sinners will most likely laugh at you, and mock you; but do not get peevish or angry with them. See how they insulted your dying Saviour, and yet how He pitied and forgave them! Luke xxiii. 34; Heb. xii. 3.

2. *Shrink from no cross in the way of duty.*—"For the joy that was set before Him,"—the joy of doing the Father's will by redeeming and saving men,—Jesus "endured the cross," and "despised the shame." These things were to Him but a rugged path, by which to enter into His glory. If patiently endured for His sake, they may be the same to you. See Heb. xii. 1, 2; Rev. iii. 21.

3. *Adore the infinite condescension of the Son of God.*—"He was crucified, dead, and buried."

> "Thus low the Lord of Life was brought;
> Such wonders love can do:
> Thus cold in death that Bosom lay,
> Which throbb'd and bled for you."

4. *Look at the death of Jesus till you love Him for His love.*—All He did, and all He suffered, was for YOU. All His shame, all His agonies, were for YOUR sake.

5. *The work of redemption is finished.*—See v. 37; John xvii. 4; xix. 30. All may now be saved who will. Will YOU?

6. *When you cannot do what you would, do what you can.*—When the women could not "minister," they stood "afar off," and watched. Weak women have often proved more valiant than strong men.

7. *Feeble faith may become strong.*—If you have a little faith, pray for more. They who "stagger at the promises of God," may yet become "strong in faith." Joseph, of Arimathæa, one of the most timid of Christ's disciples, became the boldest of them all.

QUESTIONS.—Where was Jesus crucified? What was written over Him? What did it mean? Who were crucified with Him? Who insulted Him? how? Why did He not drink the mixture offered Him? What wonders happened while He hung on the cross? What effect had these things on the centurion? Who watched? Who was Joseph? What did he?

Illustrations.—I. GOLGOTHA.

See v. 22. "This was the *Hebrew* name of the spot at which our Lord was crucified. Two explanations of the word are given: (1.) that it was a spot where executions ordinarily took place, and, therefore, abounded in skulls; but, according to Jewish law, these must have been buried, and, therefore, were no more likely to confer a name on the spot than any other part of the body. Or, (2.) it may come from the look or form of the spot itself; bald, round, and skull-like; and, therefore a mound or hillock, in accordance with the common phrase—for which there is no direct authority—'Mount Calvary.' . . . It was probably the ordinary spot for executions."—*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

II. VINEGAR.

See v. 36. "The Hebrew term *chomets* was applied to a beverage consisting generally of wine or strong drink turned sour, (whence its use was proscribed to the Nazarite, Num. vi. 3,) but sometimes artificially made by an admixture of barley and wine, and thus liable to fermentation. It was acid even to a proverb; (Prov. x. 26;) . . . but was serviceable for the purpose of sopping bread, as used by labourers, (Ruth ii. 14.) . . . Similar to the *chomets* of the Hebrews, was the *acetum* of the Romans,—a thin, sour wine consumed by soldiers, either in a pure state, or, more usually, mixed with water, when it was termed *posca*. . . . This was the beverage of which the Saviour partook in His dying moments; and, doubtless, it was refreshing to His exhausted frame, though offered in derision.—*Ibid.*

SEPTEMBER 13.—MORNING LESSON.

EVENTS IN REPHIDIM.—Exodus xvii.

For repetition, verses 10—12.

SUMMARY.—The Israelites murmur on account of the want of water, and have it miraculously supplied. The Amalekites assail them, and are defeated by the holding up of the hands of Moses.

I. MASSAH AND MERIBAH.—V. 1—7. As there was *no water* to drink in *Rephidim*, the *people chided with Moses*, and were so unreasonable in their rage, that Moses feared they would *stone* him. This murmuring he called *tempting the Lord*,—i. e., unbelieving doubt of His gracious presence with them. As when they murmured for want of bread, so here again, God provides for the want without punishing the impatience. Moses was *to go on before the people*, accompanied by some *of the elders* as witnesses, to *a rock in Horeb*, upon which God would appear before him. He was then to *smite the rock* with the *rod wherewith* he *smote the river* Nile, ch. vii. 20; assured that water would then gush forth sufficient for the wants of all the congregation. The place where this miracle occurred, received the names of *Massah* and *Meribah*,—i. e., "Temptation" and "murmuring," that this sin of the people might never be forgotten. See Deut. vi. 16.

II. THE FIGHT WITH AMALEK.—V. 8—13. The Amalekites were the descendants of a grandson of Esau. See Gen. xxxvi. 12. They were, therefore, of a kindred race to the Israelites. They had, however, become so thoroughly estranged from the true God, that, without any provocation, they rose up against His chosen people as

the first champions of heathenism. We find, from Deut. xxv. 17, 18, that they treacherously attacked the faint and tired rear of the Israelitish army. Moses directed Joshua to lead a band of picked men against them; and went himself, with Aaron and Hur, to the top of a hill within sight of the field of battle, to encourage and pray for his struggling countrymen. *The rod of God*, which he held in his hands, and by means of which he had wrought so many miracles, might well be regarded as the banner of victory by the fighting Israelites in the plain below; but it was also "a sign to Jehovah, carrying up, as it were, to God, the wishes and prayers of Moses; and bringing down, from God, victorious powers for Israel." As the success of Israel so clearly depended upon the continued lifting up of the hands of Moses, Aaron and Hur assisted to support them; and by sun-down, Joshua had gained the victory *with the edge of the sword*—i. e., without quarter.

III. JEHOVAH NISSI.—V. 14—16. This battle was so important, that God commanded Moses to narrate it *in a book*, especially for the instruction and encouragement of Joshua; and Moses himself was so impressed by it, that he *built an altar* on the spot, and called it *Jehovah Nissi*,—i. e., "The Lord my Banner." Compare Judges vi. 24. (Margin.)

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Christ is the smitten Rock.*—He is as necessary and as free to all as the water to the Israelites in the wilderness. He alone satisfies the soul, and supplies rivers of joy, which follow His people through life. See Isai. xii. 3; John iv. 14; 1 Cor. x. 4. How awful an eternal thirst! See Luke xvi. 24. Drink now, or thirst for ever.

2. *Impatience is very unreasonable.*—It led Israel to quarrel with Moses, though he was one of the meekest, greatest, and best of men; and, which was far worse, to quarrel with God Himself, who had delivered them from Egypt, and wrought such wonders for them.

3. "*Pray without ceasing.*"—In all our conflicts with Satan, the world, and sin, we can only get strength for victory by means of incessant prayer.

QUESTIONS.—Where did the Israelites want water? To what sin did this want lead them? What did they say to Moses? What did he do? How was water procured? What was the place called? Who were the Amalekites? What did they do to Israel? Who was appointed to lead the Jews in battle? What did Moses? How was the victory won? Who helped Moses? how?

Illustrations.—I. JOSHUA.

See v. 9. The proper name of Joshua, who appears here for the first time as the servant of Moses, was Hoshea. He was a prince of the tribe of Ephraim, Num. xiii. 8, 16; Deut. xxxii. 44. His name was changed, probably, at the time when he entered Moses' service, either before or after the battle with the Amalekites. *Hoshea* means "help," or "salvation;" and *Joshua*, "God's help," or "God's salvation."

II. HUR.

See v. 10. Hur is mentioned again, ch. xxiv. 14, as being, with Aaron, left in charge of the people by Moses, during his ascent of Sinai. From this it would appear that he must have been connected with the family of Moses, and a man of distinction. Josephus, following a Jewish tradition, which is by no means improbable, describes him as the husband of Miriam.

SEPTEMBER 13.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE VISION OF ZACHARIAS.—Luke i. 1—23.

SUMMARY.—St. Luke begins his Gospel with a brief preface, and then gives an account of the visit of Gabriel to Zacharias and Elisabeth, announcing the birth of their son, John the Baptist.

I. PREFATORY.—V. 1—4. *Many.*—Such a life as that of our Lord was sure to find many biographers. *To set forth in order*,—to compile, or arrange. *A declaration*,—a narrative, or history. *Among us*,—Christians. *Even as they*, &c.—The Apostles, &c., *delivered* these matters orally, and others drew up accounts of what they thus learnt. *From the beginning*,—i. e., of Christ's public

life, Acts i. 21. *Having had perfect*, &c, —or, "Having accurately traced all," &c.—*Wesley. In order*,—i. e., methodically, or consecutively. *Most excellent Theophilus.*—This was a person of rank, as his title implies, and probably a convert to Christianity. Compare Acts xxiii. 26; xxiv. 3; xxvi. 25.

II. Zacharias and Elisabeth.—V. 5—7. *Of the course of Abia*, — or, "Abijah." This was the eighth of the twenty-four courses into which the priests were divided by David. See 1 Chron. xxiv. 10. *Of the daughters of Aaron*,—so that John the Baptist was of priestly descent by both his parents. *Elisabeth.*—This is the same in Hebrew as "Elisheba," the name of Aaron's wife, Exod. vi. 23. Zacharias and Elisabeth were devoted and holy; but they were old, and *had no child*, a circumstance which, especially in Judæa, was thought a great misfortune.

III. The Angel. — V. 8—12. *In the order of his course.*—The courses were of a week's duration each. *His lot.*—It was decided by lot who should perform the different parts of the sacred service. *To burn incense.*—This office was considered exceedingly important and honourable. *The people were praying*, &c.—Their prayers were offered while the incense was burnt, as the smoke was the symbol of acceptable prayer. See Ps. cxli. 2; Rev. v. 8 (Margin); viii. 3, 4. *There appeared unto him an angel.*—This was, therefore, not a mere vision, but an actual angelic appearance. *On the right side.*—The right was the favourable side; so that the position of the angel was a good omen. Compare Matt. xxv. 33. *The altar of incense.* See Exod. xxx. 1; xl. 5, 26. *He was troubled.*—It was so great a thing to be visited by an angel; and his humility led him to think only of his unworthiness. Compare ver. 28, 29; ch. ii. 29; Judges vi. 22; xiii. 22; Dan. x. 8; Acts x. 4.

IV. The Message.—V. 13—17. *Thy prayer is heard.*—Zacharias had, long before, prayed for a son; but, as appears from v. 18, he had now ceased to look for an answer to his prayer. We may well suppose, however, that a higher aspiration arose from the aged priest ministering in the holy place. He was one of those who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem," ch. ii. 38; and he doubtless prayed for that. The angel's message shows that he was heard in both. *John*,—"the grace of God," or, "God is favourable." Johanan is the same Hebrew name, 2 Kings xxv. 23; 1 Chron. iii. 24; 2 Chron. xxviii. 12. *Many shall rejoice.*—See v. 57, 58. *Great in the sight of the Lord*,—and, therefore, truly great. See 1 Sam. xvi. 7; Luke xvi. 15. *Strong drink*,—any strong liquor not made from grapes. See ch. vii. 33, and compare Num. vi. 2, 3; Judges xiii. 4. *Filled with the Holy Ghost*,—to qualify him for his great work. Compare Eph. v. 18. *Shall go before Him*,—i. e., *the Lord their God*,—that is, Christ. *In the spirit and power of Elias.*—See Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5, 6. He would resemble Elijah, but be greater than he, ch. vii. 28. *Turn the hearts of the fathers to the children*,—strengthen the ties of family affection.

V. The Sign.—V. 18—23. *Whereby*, &c.—Compare Gen. xvii. 17. Abraham's faith was a strong contrast to the unbelief of Zacharias. See Rom. iv. 19—21. *Gabriel*,—i. e., "God's hero." *Stand in the presence of God.*—He was a chief angel, whose station was near the throne. The same appeared to Daniel. See Dan. viii. 16, 17; ix. 21. *Shalt be dumb.*—This was the "sign," appointed in displeasure. *Waited*,—for the priest to return and dismiss them, with the usual benediction. See Num. vi. 23—26. *Beckoned unto them*,—made signs, to show that he was dumb.

Reflections.—1. *Superiors should be respected.*—Some ignorant people refuse to give them their proper titles. This is not according to the Gospel. See v. 3.

2. *God honours His faithful servants.*—He has many ways of doing this. Zacharias and Elisabeth had the high honour of being the parents of Christ's forerunner. They were "righteous" and "blameless;" and only such does God delight to honour.

3. "*Prepare to meet thy God.*"—Zacharias trembled at the sight of an angel. Where, then, will "the ungodly and the sinner appear," when the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints?

4. *Parents and children should love one another*, v. 17.

5. *The "disobedient" may become "just,"* v. 17.

6. *Unbelief dishonours and displeases God.*—We have seen how it was punished in Zacharias; and see Num.

xiv. 11, 12; 2 Kings vii. 2, 17—20; Mark xvi. 16; Heb. iii. 18, 19.

QUESTIONS.—Why did St. Luke write his Gospel? To whom does he address it? How does he style him? Who were Zacharias and Elisabeth? What was their character? Who appeared to Zacharias? where? why? What was to be his son's name? What office was he to fulfil? How was he to be brought up? Why was Zacharias struck dumb?

Illustration.—COURSES OF PRIESTS.

See v. 5, 8. "The priests were divided by David into twenty-four bodies, or 'courses,' 1 Chron. xxiv.; each of which attended to the services of the sanctuary for the space of a week, 2 Kings xi. 9. Each class had its 'chief,' 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. . . After the captivity, four only of the original twenty-four courses returned, Ezra ii. 36—39; but the names and order of the missing courses were still retained."—*Scripture Manners and Customs.*

SEPTEMBER 20.—MORNING LESSON.

THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS. — Luke i. 59—80.

For repetition, verses 68—70.

SUMMARY.—The child of Zacharias and Elisabeth is born, and called by a wrong name. Zacharias corrects the error, and foretells the greatness of John, and the coming of Jesus.

I. THE WRONG NAME.—V. 59—62. *They called him Zacharias.*—The names of children were given at circumcision, just as with us at baptism; because, when the former rite was instituted, the names of Abram and Sarai were changed to Abraham and Sarah. The relatives and near friends of the family met, as we should say, at the christening. They wished to call the child after his father, according to a favourite custom of the Jews; but his mother, guided by the Holy Spirit, insisted that his name should be John.

II. JOHN.—V. 63—66. The dispute about the name of the child could only be settled by an appeal to his dumb father, who, as instructed by Gabriel, (v. 13,) confirmed Elisabeth's decision; and *immediately* he received his speech again. The spectators, and all who heard of these things, could not fail to discern the finger of God in them. The attention of the nation was thus attracted early to the Baptist, and the foundation of his popularity was laid in his cradle.

III. "A HORN OF SALVATION."—V. 67—75. *Prophesied*,—spoke under Divine inspiration. *Visited*,—seen our state, and come to help us. *A horn of salvation.*—A horn is a symbol of strength; and the meaning here is, "A mighty Saviour." *Our enemies*,—the world, the flesh, and the devil. When Zacharias recovered the power of speech, he was *filled with the Holy Ghost*, and said, or sang, this beautiful and grateful song. He saw that "the fulness of time was come;" that Messiah was at hand; and that the promises made from Adam to Malachi were now to be fulfilled. He saw that a flood of light and joy was about to overspread the world; and he sang, as already realizing it.

IV. "THE PROPHET OF THE HIGHEST."—V. 76—80. *To prepare His ways.*—See Isai. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1. *By the remission of their sins*,—in which way alone the *knowledge of salvation* can be imparted. *The Dayspring from on high*,—i. e., the first light of morning. This is put for the coming Saviour, the promised Child of Mary. Compare Mal. iv. 2; Eph. v. 14; Rev. xxii. 16. Zacharias saw that the true Light was already dawning; and exulted in the birth of his illustrious son, who, though "He was not that Light," was "sent to bear witness of that Light," John i. 8, 9. *In the deserts.*—He grew up, in solitude and abstemiousness, among the hills bordering on the wilderness. See ver. 39, 40. *The day of his showing*,—the commencement of his public ministry. This was thirty years after his birth; and during all those years he lived in or near the "deserts," where he loved to wander, to muse on his great mission.

REFLECTIONS. — 1. *God should be praised for His goodness.*—When He says, "Ephphatha!" we should say,

"Hallelujah!" Zacharias was struck dumb for his unbelief; but when his tongue was loosed, his first words were praise.

2. *God remembers when men forget.*—See ver. 68. The Jews had generally forgotten Him, yet how graciously did He remember them! Numbers daily forget Him now, yet He protects and provides for them every day.

3. *There is no salvation without the forgiveness of sins.*

4. *There is no forgiveness of sins without knowledge of salvation.*

5. "*What manner of child will this be?*"—This question was asked in regard to John the Baptist; and loving and anxious hearts have often asked it in regard to *you*. Your life will give the answer. How is it shaping itself?

QUESTIONS.—What name did Zacharias's friends wish to give his boy? What did his mother call him? Why did they object to this? How was the dispute settled? What then happened to Zacharias? What did he do? Where was John brought up? What can you tell of his after-life?

Illustration.—"THE DAYSPRING."

See v. 78. "A king's minister once remarked concerning the daughter of Pandeyan, after she had been in great trouble on account of the danger in which her husband had been placed, 'She has seen the great ocean of darkness, but now she saw the rising sun,—the dayspring appeared.'"—*Roberts.*

SEPTEMBER 20.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

PRAISE AND PRIVILEGE.—Psalm xxxiv.

SUMMARY.—The Psalmist thanks God for a great deliverance, and invites others to join him in doing so. He then goes on to teach the way to lead a safe and happy life.

I. "O MAGNIFY THE LORD!"—V. 1—7. *At all times.*—God's benefits are unceasing, and our praise should be so. See Eph. v. 20; Col. iii. 17; 1 Thess. v. 18; Heb. xiii. 15. *Her boast.*—See Jer. ix. 24. *The humble,*—i. e., the poor, the afflicted, the oppressed, such as David had been. *And be glad.*—Compare Ps. cxix. 74; cxlii. 7. *I sought the Lord,*—when in peril at Gath. See 1 Sam. xxi. 10—15, and compare the title of this Psalm. *They,*—i. e., the Lord's humble, meek, uncomplaining ones. *Looked unto Him,*—i. e., have always done so in times of great extremity, as a sick child looks mournfully to its parents for help. *Were lightened.*—Anxiety having left their hearts, serenity returned to their countenances. *Ashamed,*—literally, "were not red;" i. e., they did not blush for shame, as disappointed persons sometimes do. *This poor man.*—David is speaking of himself. *The Angel of the Lord,*—"the Angel in whom is the name of the Lord. Josh. v. 14; Isai. lxiii. 9. As Captain of the Lord's host, He is to be thought of as attended by armies of inferior ministering angels, Ps. xci. 11, 12; 2 Kings vi. 17."—*Hengstenberg.*

II. "O TASTE AND SEE!"—V. 8—10. *Taste and see.*—The advantages of religion are not all and only future. It gives present peace and joy. All who *trust* in the Lord are *blessed*, or happy. *Fear the Lord*, &c.—The true fear of God is always connected with love and obedience; and from him who fears, loves, and obeys God, no good thing shall be withholden. *The young lions.*—Compare Ezek. xix. 2—9; xxxviii. 13. It is agreed that by "young lions" are meant rich, powerful, and violent men. *Shall not want*, &c.—Compare Ps. lxxxiv. 11; Matt. vi. 31—33.

III. "COME, YE CHILDREN!"—V. 11—16. *Hearken unto me.*—One experienced in God's ways here addresses young people. Compare Prov. i. 8; iv. 1; vi. 20. *What man*, &c.—They who would live long and happily, should attend to the following directions. *Keep thy tongue*, &c.—Compare Ps. xxxix. 1; cxli. 3; James iii. 2; 1 Peter ii. 22. *Depart from evil.*—Compare Ps. xxxvii. 27; Isai. i. 16, 17. *Seek peace.*—We should not only be peaceable, but peacemakers. See Matt. v. 5, 9; Rom. xii. 18; xiv. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

IV. When "the Righteous Cry," the Lord is Near.—V. 17—22. "*A brokenheart*,—the heart broken to shivers. *A contrite spirit*,—i. e., the beaten-out spirit. In both words the hammer is necessarily implied; in breaking to pieces the ore first, and then plating out the metal when it has been separated from the ore."—*Dr. A. Clarke.* The word of God is the hammer. See Jer. xxiii. 29. *Many are*, &c.—God does not show His regard for the *righteous* by keeping them from *trouble*, but by *delivering* them out of it. *Not one of them is broken*,—i. e., without His permission. Compare Matt.x.30. *Shall be desolate*,—literally, "shall be guilty;" that is, their guilt shall be made manifest by the calamities which overtake them.

Reflections.—1. *The deliverance of one of God's servants should encourage the rest*, v. 2.

2. *Light comes by looking to the Lord*, v. 5.—He guides and gladdens. He makes our way both plain and pleasant.

3. *The Lord hears the prayer of the poor*, v. 6.—Others may disdain them, but not He. See Ps. cii. 17.

4. *God has all His servants under His protection*, v. 7.—He gives His angels charge concerning them, to succour and deliver them.

5. *Religion is a blessing to be experienced*, v. 8.—If we plead the promises, God will perform them, and we shall thus be made to "taste" that He is good. See 1 Peter ii. 3; Heb. vi. 5.

6. "*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*"—St. Paul was dependent on the kindness of his friends; yet, because he was godly and content, he had all, and abounded. See Phil. iv. 10—18.

7. *Children should be willing learners.*—They should not be too fond of play, but always be seeking useful knowledge. They should be most attentive when "the fear of the Lord" is taught them. Only this can rightly enable them to live, and fit them to die.

Questions.—On what occasion was this Psalm written? What did David resolve to do? How would his case encourage "the humble?" Why does he call himself a "poor man?" How are God's servants guarded? How may God's goodness be "tasted?" Who are meant by "young lions?" What is best worth knowing? What is likeliest to make life long and happy?

Illustration.—David's feigned madness.

See Title. "Being persecuted by Saul, David betook himself to the land of the Philistines. There, he who had on former occasions injured the Philistines so grievously, was recognized, and brought into the presence of King Achish. For the purpose of saving his life, which at the time was in very imminent danger, he feigned himself mad; and God blessed this expedient, which, considered by itself, was one of a very doubtful character. The fifty-sixth Psalm also refers to the same occasion: there we have the prayer which David addressed to God in his extremity, and here his thanksgiving for deliverance."—*Hengstenberg.* Abimelech was the general name of the Philistine kings, like Pharaoh of the Egyptian kings. The proper name of this king of Gath was Achish. 1 Sam. xxi. 10—15.

SEPTEMBER 27.—Morning Lesson.

Jethro's joy.—Exodus xviii. 1—12.

For repetition, verses 9—11.

Summary.—Jethro brings the wife and sons of Moses to meet him. He rejoices on hearing of God's wonderful dealings with the Israelites, and joins them in a sacrificial meal.

I. Father, Daughter, and Grandsons.—V. 1—6. The report of the conquest of Amalek spread through the surrounding nations, and came to the ears of *Jethro*. Zipporah and her boys had been left under his protection, while Moses was engaged in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses, when he went back to Egypt, knew certainly that he would return to Sinai; and it was, probably, then arranged that his father-in-law should bring his wife and children to join him there. Jethro was, doubtless, encouraged to do this by the important victory just

gained over the Amalekites, which showed that he might now leave his daughter and his grandchildren with his son-in-law without anxiety or danger. *Gershom* means "a stranger there;" and *Eliezer*, "My God is a help."

II. Father-in-law and Son-in-law.—V. 7—12. The words of Jethro, v. 6, were delivered to Moses by a messenger; so that the latter was in his tent, and had to come *out* to receive *his father-in-law*, &c. *Did obeisance*, — bowed himself; thus showing his respect for Jethro's age and office. *Kissed him*,—in proof of his affection. *The travail*,—their troubles after leaving the Red Sea. See ch. xv. 23; xvi. 2, 3; xvii. 1, 3, 8. In each case Moses had a wonderful story to tell. These marvellous works of God led Jethro also to bless the Lord, and to acknowledge that He was *greater than all gods*,—words which seem to imply that he had been a believer in "gods many," but that these things had convinced him of his error. *A burnt-offering*,—to make atonement for his forsaken sin. *Sacrifices for God*,—thank-offerings. Jethro, Moses, Aaron, and *all the elders of Israel* joined in a covenant-meal on the latter. *Before God.*—It means in the holy place, where God was specially present.

Reflections.—1. *God always keeps His promises.* — Compare ver. 5 with ch. iii. 12. How much lay between the promise and the fulfilment! Nothing is "too hard for the Lord." See Gen. xviii. 14.

2. *They who stand high in God's favour, are ever loving, and never proud*, v. 7.

3. *We should get gladness from others' gains, and give thanks to God on their account.*—See v. 9, and Rom. xii. 15.

4. *We should talk to each other about God's great works.*—See v. 8—12, and Ps. cxlv. 3—12.

5. *The Gospel is good news.*—What Moses told to Jethro was good news, but what the Gospel tells is infinitely better. "Herein is love," that God sent His Son to save us by dying for us. These are "good tidings of great joy" for "all people."

Questions.—What was the name of the wife of Moses? Of her father? Where did he come from? Of what had he heard? What did this lead him to do? What were the names of the boys? What do they mean? Why were they so called? What took place after they came to Moses?

Illustration.—Jethro.

See v. 1. "The hospitality, free-hearted and unsought, which Jethro at once extended to the unknown, homeless wanderer, on the relation of his daughters that he had watered their flock, is a picture of Eastern manners no less true than lovely, ch. ii. 16—21. We may, perhaps, suppose that Jethro, before his acquaintance with Moses, was not a worshipper of the true God. Traces of this appear in the delay which Moses had suffered to take place with respect to the circumcision of his son, ch. iv. 24—26: indeed, it is even possible that Zipporah had afterwards been subjected to a kind of divorce, (v. 2,) on account of her attachment to an alien creed, but that growing convictions were at work in the mind of Jethro, from the circumstance of Israel's continued prosperity, till at last, acting upon these, he brought back his daughter, and declared that his impressions were confirmed; for '*now* he knew that the Lord was greater than all gods,' &c.; consequently, we are told that 'Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for *God:* and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law *before God*;' as though to celebrate the event of his conversion."—*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

SEPTEMBER 27.—Afternoon Lesson.

The early days of Jesus.—Luke ii. 21—52.

Summary.—Jesus is circumcised and named, taken to the temple, welcomed by Simeon and Anna, grows in strength and wisdom, astonishes the doctors, and submits to his parents.

I. Named and Presented.—V. 21—24. When Jesus was eight days old, He was circumcised; and when forty days old, He was, in due course, presented at the Temple. *As it is written in the law of the Lord*,—according to which all the "firstborn" were to be dedicated to God,—i. e., for the temple-service. Instead of these, however, God had taken the tribe of Levi, Num. iii. 12; but it was still necessary to redeem all eldest sons from the service of the sanctuary by the payment of "five shekels," Num. xviii. 16. This

was done in remembrance of the deliverance from Egypt. Because the destroying angel spared the Israelites when he slew the firstborn of the Egyptians, the eldest son of every Jewish family was considered God's special property. *A sacrifice.*—On those occasions a lamb and a young pigeon were the offerings of the rich, and "a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons," of the poor, Lev. xii. 6, 8.

II. CELEBRATED.—V. 25—38. (1.) By Simeon.—*The Consolation of Israel.*—Jesus is so called, probably, from Isai. xl. 1. Compare Acts xxviii. 20. *Should not see death, before,* &c.—He was, therefore, waiting to see Him, and die. *Came by the Spirit.* — The Spirit having taught him to wait for Him, now showed where he might find Him. Arriving at the Temple, and seeing his Infant Saviour, he *took Him up in his arms, blessed God* that he had lived till then, and prayed for an immediate dismissal to his rest. Joseph and Mary naturally *marvelled* at all this; and, perceiving their astonishment, the old man *blessed them,* praying, doubtless, that they might be supported when their great trial came. See John xix. 25.

2. By Anna.—This *prophetess* married early, and in *seven years* her husband died; since then she had lived "a widow indeed." Compare 1 Tim. v. 3—5. She was now led, no doubt by "the Spirit," to come in at *that instant,* purposely to add her testimony to that of Simeon.

III. GROWING UP.—V. 39—52. *And when they had,*—that is, *after* they had, &c. The visit of the wise men, the slaughter of the innocents, and the flight into Egypt are omitted in St. Luke's account. See Matt. ii. *Grew,*—in body. "The body advances in stature, and the soul in wisdom. . . . The Divine nature revealed its own wisdom in proportion to the measure of the bodily growth."—*Cyril. Went up,* &c.—This incident is related as showing the wisdom with which the Child was becoming *filled. In the company,*—i. e., which formed the caravan, or band of travellers; all who came from the same district travelling together for company and protection. *Thy father.*—This shows that until now Jesus had called Joseph His father. Henceforth, He owns no father but God. His answer intimates that they might have been easy about Him, assured that the SON OF GOD would be safe and suitably employed.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Justice and devoutness should go together,* v. 25.—The one is not enough without the other.

2. *They who have seen Christ need not fear death.* — Have you seen Him? All may see Him by faith.

3. *Death is a departure.*—It is not our "end." When we die, we go somewhere else.

4. *Pray without ceasing.* — Other duties may be occasional, but prayer must be continual.

5. *Serve God in youth, and He will honour and bless you in old age.*

6. *Love, and obey your parents.*—In this respect, as well as others, copy the example of Jesus.

QUESTIONS.—What was the law respecting the first-born? What sacrifice did Mary offer? Who was Simeon? What was his character? What did he wait for? What promise had he received? How was it fulfilled? What did he do, and say? What said he to Mary? Who was Anna? Where was Jesus brought up? Why did He go to Jerusalem? How was He lost? Where found? What doing?

Illustration—CAMP OF PILGRIMS.

See v. 44. "Spent the first part of the night in walking about the camp. . . Spread abroad over the plain lay men, women, and children, of almost every nation under heaven. . . faint image of that great congregation when the trumpet shall sound and wake the dead. The camp did not become quiet at all, and about midnight everything was again set in motion. We hastily mounted our animals to keep from being trampled underfoot. . . The night was exceedingly dark, and, as we approached the defile leading up to the mountain, the confusion became horrible,—women screaming in terror when about to be trampled down by a long line of camels coupled together; parents calling for their children; friends hallooing for friends. . . It is not at all surprising that Joseph and Mary should suppose that Jesus was in their company. . . nor is the time that elapsed before they became alarmed at His absence at all remarkable. I question whether there is ever a pilgrimage made from Jerusalem to the Jordan, at this day, without the separation of parents and children equally prolonged; and, in the case we are considering, it was the absence of a Youth who, His parents well knew, had never done an unwise or improper act. They would not, therefore, be easily alarmed on His account."—*The Land and the Book.*

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THE
WESLEYAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

PRACTICAL PAPERS.

"PLAINNESS OF SPEECH."

IT is pleasant to learn, it is yet pleasanter to teach. There is some gratification in hearing an item of good news, there is much more in telling it to others,—in watching the interest and pleasure which the recital of it awakens in our listeners. This, indeed, is but one of many forms in which the truth of our Lord's saying is felt, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The highest happiness of a good Sunday-school teacher, arising from that office, will always be derived from witnessing evidence of the early conversion of his scholars, and proof, in their growing goodness, that his work is successful. Like St. John, he will say, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." But, beside this best enjoyment, there is another which leads to it, and which may be more or less ensured every Sunday. It is the pleasure to be derived from really teaching the scholars something which they did not know before, from making something plain and intelligible to them, which till then was perplexing to them, or hidden from them; from putting something before them in a way to touch their feelings and awaken their interest, which before was without effect. That there is pleasure, most genuine, to be derived from such successes, a multitude of our best teachers would bear witness; it gives zest and relish to their efforts, and compensates their painstaking.

Without effort and painstaking, though, and these of a well-directed kind, this gratification cannot be enjoyed. Talking is not always teaching. What comes of what is said must very much depend on the way in which it is said,—on tone, on manner, on the words used, and on the adaptation of means taken to explain and enforce the topic on hand. Bishop Usher said, "It takes all our learning to make things plain." If this be true of the acquirements and efforts of preachers to adult congregations, much more must it hold good in reference to teachers whose listeners are children. All that they can learn as to the meaning of Scripture; all that they can gather by way of illustrating it; all practical hints which they can appropriate for catching attention, and for enabling juvenile understandings to "take hold of instruction,"—they will need in

order to ensure much of that enjoyment of which we have spoken. Foremost among requisites for this, probably, is simplicity of style and language.

Any one who wishes to be a thoroughly successful Sunday-school teacher must aim at this. Efficient no one can be who is not able to talk about truth in such a way as will help little ones to see the meaning of those passages of Scripture which they are set to read, and to understand the doctrines which they have to repeat from Catechisms. What every teacher should aim at is, so by explanation, by illustration, and by application, to present the truth to his scholars that it shall be well fitted for the Holy Spirit's use in renewing their hearts and regulating their lives. But truth can have no influence upon a hearer if it be told in words which he does not understand. It must first be made clear to his mind, if it is to affect his heart, or rouse his conscience, or rule his behaviour. If teachers desire to be forceful, let them aim to be simple.

Among other excellent remarks on this subject, Dr. Steel* says, "A plain style is the most successful method of imparting knowledge to mankind. The ablest preachers and teachers have been distinguished for their simplicity. Variety may make men write learnedly. Piety only will lead the learned to be simple. This was Luther's way. His style was simple, popular, and did great good. He used this in his discourses, in his hymns, in his Catechism, and in his wonderful translation of the Scriptures, which were for people at large. Hence his words bore the light of heaven into the darkened minds of the fatherland, interested old and young, and made the people familiar with the truth of God. Quintilian, the ancient Roman writer, remarks that our meaning in words of instruction, "like the sun, should obtrude itself upon the eyes of the ignorant, not only without any pains to search for it, but, as it were, whether he will or not." Dr. South, in one of his terse and weighty sentences, said, "He is the powerfullest preacher, and the best orator, who can make himself best understood." Archbishop Tillotson, a prince of sacred orators of his day, used to read his sermons to an illiterate old woman of plain sense, who lived with him; and, if any words were not intelligible to her, he altered them before he preached the discourse to the congregation. Baxter practised great simplicity. The account which he gives of his style is very interesting. After enumerating several circumstances that conspired to make his style plain, he

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* "The Christian Teacher in Sunday-Schools."

adds, "I think that all these are partly causes, but I am sure the principal cause is a long custom of studying how to speak and write in the keenest manner to the common, ignorant, and ungodly people; without which keenness to them, no sermon nor book does much good, which has so habituated me to it, that I am falling into the same with others. . . . And I have a strong natural inclination to speak of every subject just as it is, and to call a spade a spade, and to fit words to subjects, so as that the thing spoken of may be fullest known by the words, which, methinks, is part of our speaking truly."

"Teachers in Sabbath-schools are much more required to be simple, since they teach the young, whose knowledge of words is small, and whose minds are yet unused to learned phrases. Be plain in speech. Give a clear view of what you teach. Let your teaching be understood. However small a lesson you may give, let it be made plain to the young minds of your scholars. Especially when showing the way of salvation, tell the story of Calvary in simple words."

FRIENDLY HINTS: THE THOROUGH TEACHER.

THERE may be some people who think the work of a Sunday-school teacher so trivial, that any one can perform it properly and prosperously. This is a wrong notion, which none can entertain who have given the subject much consideration. Let it be remembered that the great object of Sunday-school teaching is to imbue the minds of scholars with noble and elevating truths, to help them to "become wise unto salvation," and to bring, rather than merely to point, them to Christ. This being the case, it will be seen that every teacher ought to possess at least the one qualification of personal religion. Without this he cannot be really useful; with it he will be able to accomplish much. It is to be feared that in our schools we have not a few unconverted teachers. We do not wish unnecessarily to hurt their feelings, or undervalue their help; but the respect we entertain for them may not restrain us from saying, that until they have experienced that blessed change which they ought to urge upon their scholars, they cannot be considered thorough teachers. So long as they remain as they are, they resemble the mile-post, pointing the road, but remaining stationary. The unconverted teacher may succeed in giving instruction to the scholars; but he cannot probe to the root of the disease which rankles in their unregenerate hearts, nor can he fully explain that with which he himself has not become familiar. "Experience is the best teacher;" and he cannot tell much of the sweet, forgiving love of the Redeemer who has not felt it. Without personal religion no one is able thoroughly and successfully to engage in the work of the Sunday-school.

Whilst regarding this as the first and most needed requirement in a teacher, we must not forget that, if all good results are to follow, other qualifications are essential. We have those in our schools who, though well-

meaning and truly converted, are but indifferent teachers. This is to be attributed to the fact that they do not attach sufficient importance to the duty in which they are engaged, and have not yet acquired the habit of thoroughness in it. To such we would say, you are engaged in a great work; down to its smallest detail it is important. It is yours to impart information, to open the avenues of knowledge, to exercise and expand powers which may some day become mighty, to allure the children to Christ, and to teach them to obey His commands. Upon you much responsibility rests with regard to the eight or ten immortal souls committed to your trust. You are, in some measure, answerable for the impressions that are made on their minds while you are among them; and you will have to give an account of the manner in which you have discharged your duties. How necessary, then, is it that you throw your whole mind, heart, and soul into the work, and do it "as unto the Lord." Bear this in mind, that you are not working for yourselves, but that you are employed in God's service, and, as all work for Him ought to be done thoroughly, let there be no neglect, no trifling, no lukewarmness in yours. God addresses to you the admonition, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." He expects you to labour with that zealous earnestness which finds its inspiration at the foot of the Cross. Strive, then, to be true, thorough, conscientious teachers! Let no part of your work be done carelessly! Esteem none of it lightly! Master every detail, however paltry it may appear; remembering that nothing is unimportant which conduces to the attainment of an important end. We would press upon you the necessity of observing the following particulars:—

Be punctual in your attendance.—Consider it your duty to be at your post exactly at the time fixed for commencing school-duties. If you cannot possibly attend in your turn, be sure to procure a substitute; not forgetting that the scholars would much prefer their appointed teacher.

Prepare yourselves thoroughly.—Make it your habit to master the subject appointed for consideration. Ponder it, and pray over it, during the week. Strive to discover the great truths which the lesson should convey to the children's minds, and to have them quite clear to your own; so that you may be able to make every point intelligible to the most dull and ignorant of your scholars. Never let lack of information cause you to evade questions; if you do, the children will have little confidence in you, and your prosperity will be much checked.

Cultivate a habit of prayer for God's blessing on your work.—Go more frequently than you have done from the closet to the school. Ask for Divine guidance, help, and grace. You may then expect the Spirit to accompany your words, and to melt the hearts of your most rebellious scholars. Seek to be teachers taught of God, and never forget that,—

> "Except the Lord conduct the plan,
> The best concerted schemes are vain,
> And never can succeed."

Be patient with your scholars.—You will find special need for forbearance in the discharge of your duties. The Sabbath-school is a good place to try one's long-suffering; for in the tempers and behaviour of the scholars—their trifling ways, restless limbs, noisy tongues, and slowness of advancement—the teacher has much to bear with. Yet, be patient with them, teacher! Keep a strict guard over your words and actions, and pray for the restraining and enabling grace of God. Never let the children observe in you a hasty temper, or the flash of

a scornful eye; but be kind and forbearing with them. Curb the slightest inclination to anger. Look with allowance upon their little faults and failings. Convince them that you love them: you will then find that they will give you their affections, and be obedient to your commands, far more willingly than if you were impatient and unsympathising. Bear with them, and trust in the promise, "In due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not."

In a word, do all your work thoroughly and faithfully. Make earnest efforts to win the scholars for Christ. Let not any of those whom you have taught, Sabbath after Sabbath, have to attribute their eternal ruin to your unfaithfulness. Let no difficulties discourage you, and no troubles check your zeal. Try to realize the full import of your task, and work as those conscious of their responsibility. Then, amidst all your efforts and trials, rest assured that, in the end, God will not be "unrighteous to forget your work and labour" that proceedeth "of love."

THOMAS BILL.

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

BY A MISSIONARY IN WEST ASIA.

YES, I do recollect, not many years ago, when I was a teacher in a Sunday-school thousands of miles from here—on toward the place of the sun's rising—for every day we had his rays full eight hours earlier than you; so that, as I took my seat with my class at noon, I could think of you as still enjoying your slumbers, or, perhaps, dreaming that waking-up time must be near: but, for all this, the days were no longer; for our side of the world rolled round just as fast as yours, and we looked upon the same moon and stars. Yes, that veritable old "dipper;" I always knew just where to look for it, on those cloudless summer-nights when I had my bed-chamber on the flat roof of that house which I called home.

And my class! Who were they, and how did they look? They were eight or ten middle-aged women, some of them grandmothers, all of them mothers; and they sat there, around me on the floor, each one enveloped in a white sheet, and surmounted by a fantastic head-dress composed of gay handkerchiefs, beads, pearls, gold coins, and a gracefully hanging veil of white muslin; but many of these were poor, and the pearls and gold were wanting.

Not one of them could read; but, as they listened to the blessed words of the glorious Gospel, they felt persuaded to make the attempt, and I trust, ere this, they have mastered what seemed to them then so difficult a task. But some of them, ignorant as they were, had been eye-witnesses of many of those scenes of Bible-history of which you can only read. Well do I remember, on one occasion, when our lesson was on the birth of our Saviour, and the visit of the wise men to Bethlehem, that one of those women, with a pleased look, said,—

"I have been there."

"Ah," said I, "when you went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, I suppose?"

"Yes, years ago, soon after we were married, my husband and I walked all the way; (it was a distance of about one thousand miles;) for we were poor, and could not afford a horse, and we thought we should be more sure to gain admittance to heaven for going, and should have a better seat there if we made the journey on foot; but, thank God, we know better now!" and, as she said these last words, a beautiful smile

lit up her worn features, and tears filled her eyes.

Should the lesson chance to be of Saul and his eventful journey to Damascus, I had before me women clothed in old dresses or jackets of Damascus silk, which, years ago, in their bridal days, had been brought from that city.

And some of us could talk of that delightful few hours when our ship cast an anchor, and we went ashore, and saw so much on the island of Melita; the very same "over against" which some one of whom we have all read was shipwrecked in olden times. And also, how "we sailed under Crete," and touched at Cyprus. And many of us could talk familiarly of our sails upon rafts made of goatskins down that ancient river, the river "Hiddekel," one of the four that flowed around the Garden of Eden, till we came to Nineveh, looked upon the earth which covered it, and went down under, into the very streets and rooms in which (as our imagination tried to picture) Jonah walked and preached. But come with me to that inner room whence proceeds the voice of singing, "Joyfully, joyfully, onward we go." Yes, those are the very words, only it is in another language. You cannot understand it; but what a cheering sight! Sixty little boys and girls, with faces so bright, and eyes so black, all following the instructions of that interesting and intelligent-looking young woman. Her name is Eve. We call her Eva. Her husband is one of those young men in the Bible-class out in the hall adjoining. His name is not Adam, but Sackis, and he was born in a city called Corfa, about four days distant; no other than Ur, the ancient "Ur of the Chaldees," the birthplace of Abraham, the "father of the faithful;" and over yonder sits a young man who could tell you all about his recent visit to Haran, and the wonderful ruins—and only ruins—that he saw there; ruins which, doubtless, have stood since those olden times of the prophets.

Now we will follow those little children, as they answer the call of the little bell, to the chapel-room. O, how they are filing from the rooms on this side and on that, and how close they sit upon the floor, and in the window-seats, and upon the steps of the pulpit! Every space is filled; and now, after the hymn is sung, the Superintendent asks, "What boy or girl can repeat the verses of the lesson for to-day?" Up springs a little boy over in that corner, and another here, and another there; but the first to rise is a bright girl up in the gallery. She "has the floor," and repeats the lesson in Arabic. She is a "little Syrian maid," and her name is Sara. The boys look disappointed; so, as one Badres (which, "being interpreted," is Peter) is an Armenian, he may repeat it in *his* language; and Butrus, (or Paul,) he, too, has the privilege in Turkish. But see how still and attentive every one seems to be! Yes, young and old, the little ones and the grey-haired, all drink in the words of instruction, the apt and illustrative story which the Superintendent is telling them. Many listen, not for themselves alone, but that they may carry away the words they are so freely receiving, and give them to those at home who "care for none of these things." Some of these children will not dare to tell their parents they have been to the Sunday-school, lest they be severely beaten and forbidden ever to come again. Many before us have known what it is to "suffer persecution for righteousness' sake," but have counted it "all joy," and sing the hymn,—

"We won't give up the Bible!"

with a resolution which will not be easily overcome. But time goes on, and we must leave them.

Will you not all try to improve every opportunity and every privilege, so that you may be prepared? and may you have willing minds and hearts to serve God wherever He shall choose to place you!—*Sunday-School Times.*

LITTLE ANNIE'S PRAYER.

One Sabbath afternoon I had been talking of prayer to the sixty dear children who gathered in my infant-school. I said that "it is not praying unless we mind the things we say;" and that "God, for our Saviour's sake, listens to the wants of even His little children." Then, with folded hands, closed eyes, and low voices, we all said, "Our Father who art in heaven," and I dismissed the school.

As the scholars, one after another, left their seats, all paused to say, "Good-bye, teacher," till it came to little Annie's turn. She lingered one moment, then pressed close to my side, and, looking up in my face with earnest eyes, said,—

"Miss A——, if we ask God for anything that we want very much, will He give it to us?"

"I had only time to answer, "Yes, dear," and she was gone.

Another six days, and the bright Sabbath afternoon found teachers and scholars assembled once more in the school-room. The hours passed quickly by. Each child had received a ticket, for they were all good, and of course happy. In our school every little boy and girl who is quiet and attentive gets a ticket, and after they have four blue ones, a large pink one; and then, after four pink ones, comes a beautiful book, full of pictures and stories, to keep for their own.

This day, as I was about to say "Good-bye" to little Annie, I thought she looked rather sorrowful. I asked her if she were not well. One second she was silent, and then said, with tearful eyes and quivering lips,—

"Yes, Ma'am; but you did not tell me true last Sabbath. God will not hear me when I pray."

I put my arm around the child, and, after the others had gone, I took her on my lap, and said, "Now, my dear, tell me all about it."

"O, Miss A——, you know next Sabbath the books are to be given out; and I have only three pink tickets and three blue ones, because one Sabbath I was not here, and did not get any; and I want the book so much. So, last Sabbath, I ran home as fast as I could, took off my bonnet quick, ran upstairs, and, when I had shut the door, I kneeled down by a chair, and turned all the white sides of my tickets up; and then I prayed to God, as hard as I could, to make one of my blue tickets turn pink. But when I looked, they were all the same colour yet. Then I thought, perhaps I did not mind enough the things I said. So I put the white sides up again, and prayed. I told God how much I wanted the book, how happy it would make me; and I said what you told us,—'ask, and ye shall receive.' But it is not of any use; for here they are now, three of each colour;" and she opened her little hand, while the tears streamed fast down her rosy cheeks.

I quietly took one of her blue tickets, and in its place I put a bright pink one, on which were these words: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake;" and said, "Annie, that ticket is yours. Has not God answered your prayer, dear, though not in the way you expected?" The little face was quickly upturned to mine, while a happy smile took the place of the tear-drops.

Then I tried to explain to Annie that our Heavenly Father does hear the

prayers of His children, and that it is right that they should go to Him with all their little sorrows and troubles, just as they do to their father and mother in this world, though oftentimes He will see fit to deny their requests for their own good; and, again, oftentimes answers them in the way they least expect. God does not work miracles any longer upon earth. He did not turn the blue paper pink; but He put it into the heart of little Annie to tell her teacher of her wants, and the longed-for ticket was hers, and next Sabbath she received her new book; and I trust she will never forget, when she turns over its pages, that it was a gift from her Heavenly Father, who sent His own Son into the world to die for little children.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

A MINISTER'S SATURDAY-NIGHT DREAM.

People talk as if there ought to be no difficulty about a man's faith. There is no more reason why God should not leave difficulties in the way of a man's faith than there is a reason why He should not leave difficulties in the way of a man's honesty; and the Lord has left difficulties. There are reasons enough to make faith rational; there are difficulties enough to make infidelity possible. But the more you know of this blessed Word of God the more will you love it. It has now been to me the subject of my study for a goodly number of years, and it never seemed so fresh to me as it does this day,—never so sweet to me as it is this day. If ever you find a man that does not love God's Bible, it is some man who has never tasted it. They who have tasted it, find its sweetness.

A Minister, a friend of my own, told me how, one Saturday night, he had a dream that shaped itself, no doubt, out of his waking thoughts. On the next morning, the Sabbath morning, it was his intention to preach a sermon about the Bible, but, you know, he went to sleep with his head full of the thoughts of that sermon about the Bible, and, as was natural enough, they shaped themselves into symbols. He thought he went to a large building, and there was a kind of collection as of the British Association, and there were committees in different rooms. Now, in the first of the rooms that he went to, off the great hall in which he was standing, there were a number of geologists, and they were talking about the old stones. He thought that was rather dull, and he came out, and went into the next. Now, in the next there was a company of botanists, and they were talking about all the plants and trees, from the lichen to the oak; and, after staying a while there, he came out, and went into the next. There he found a company of painters, and they were talking about the lines of beauty, and the various tints, and how they interblended each with others. When he had been there awhile, he came out again, and went into the next; and there was a company of historians, and they were talking about old, bygone empires. And when he came out of that, at the end before him there was a large gate, and at the gate there stood one, a venerable personage, with hair white as snow, and, as he approached the venerable keeper of the gate, he said, "And where does this lead to?" "O," said he, "that takes to the land of darkness and the shadow of death." Well, my friend did not want to go there; so, turning round, it seemed to him as if years had passed, and out of that place where the geologists were, there was one came forth;

and, as he came forth, he bore the blessed Bible in his hands, clasping it to his bosom; and, as he came out, he cried, "The Lord is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." And, as he looked to the door where the botanists were, there came out one clasping the same Book; and, as he came out, he cried, "He is the 'Rose of Sharon,' and the 'Lily of the Valley.'" And, as he looked beyond where those painters were, there was one came out bearing the same Book; and, as he came forth, he cried, "He is the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." And, as he looked where those historians were, there was one came out, and he bore the same Book; and as he came forth, he said, "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and His dominion endureth throughout all generations." And he thought they all went to the last gate, and there the janitor opened the door, and in they went, one after another. But, instead of its being the land of darkness, the sheen of glory came out, and he heard the harpers harping with their harps, and, with some indignation, he went to that gatekeeper, and he said, "I thought you told me that was 'the land of darkness and the shadow of death!'" "And so it is," said he, "to all that bear not that Book." And the words so affected him, that he awoke, and, as he awoke, he said,—

"That Holy Book I'd rather own,
Than all the golden gems
That e'er in monarchs' coffers shone,
Than all their diadems."

And he went forth to his work that morning to preach of God's Bible as, perhaps, he had never done before. Ah, dear friends, that is a dream, and not a dream. Those that have that blessed Book firm in their embrace, will find it to be their guide through life, and that will take them safely to the land of glory hereafter.—*Rev. S. Coley.*

THE LABOURER'S LEGACY.

Pastor Harms had a rare power of developing spiritual life among his people; and not even Baxter's parish at Kidderminster gave such evidences of the power of the Gospel to mould a whole community to a noble life. The following incident, which he relates, shows the simplicity and unreserved consecration which prevailed among them:—

Some time ago I stood by the bedside of a sick labourer, who had a wife and four children. He had lain sick for three weeks, and the sickness had exhausted all his means. Noticing that he was weeping while we sang a precious song of Zion, I asked him why he wept. Was he troubled with the thought of parting from his wife and children? He looked at me steadfastly, almost reproachfully, and answered:

"Does not Jesus stay with them? Has not the Lord said that He is 'a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widow?' No; they are well cared for. I have prayed the Lord that He would be their Guardian. Is it not so, wife? You are not troubled? You are not afraid? You believe in Jesus?"

"Surely," she replied. "I believe in Jesus, and rejoice that you go to Jesus. I shall follow you, with the children, in His own time. Jesus will help me to train the children, through His Holy Spirit."

"Why did you weep, then?" I asked.

"For joy. I thought, if the singing is so beautiful here, O how beautiful will it be when the angels help in it! I wept for joy that this blessedness is so near."

Then he motioned to his wife. She understood, and went to the shelf, and brought down a little saucer, in which her husband kept his money. There were six groschen (about sevenpence) in it; all that remained of his store. He took them out with trembling fingers, and laid them in my hand, and said,—

"The heathen must have these, that they may know how to die in peace."

I turned to his wife, who nodded assent, and said,—

"We have talked it all over already. When everything had been reckoned for the funeral, these six groschen remained."

"And what remains for you?"

"The Lord Jesus," she replied.

"And what do you leave for your wife and children?"

"The Lord Jesus," he said; and whispered in my ear, "He is very good, and very rich!"

So I took the six groschen, and laid them in the mission-box, as a great treasure; and it has been a great struggle for me to pay them away. But if they had not been paid away, the dying man's wish would not have been fulfilled.

That night he fell asleep. And neither his wife wept, nor his three eldest children, either in the church or at the grave. But the youngest child, who followed the body, wept bitterly. I asked him afterwards why he wept so bitterly at his father's grave, and the child made answer: "I was sorry that father did not take me with him to the Lord Jesus, for I begged of him, with my whole heart, that he would take me!"

He said, "I would like to go to Jesus, and would like to grow up, that mother might live with me."

"Now, then," I replied, "say to the Lord Jesus that He must choose."

"That is what I will do," he said; and was greatly delighted, and in peace.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

AUTUMN SCENES.

THROUGH hollow woods I hear the sweep of autumn's rustling train,
And summer's setting beams have streak'd the boughs with crimson stain;
Yet in this green and golden glen, where sunlit fountains gleam,
Lull'd by the south wind's soothing breath, of spring-time ye might dream:
But ever and anon there floats a falling, faded leaf,
And pensively I read thereon that beauty's bloom is brief.

This lone path through the cornfields leads where rustic gleaners stray,
And merry children, 'mongst the sheaves, gambol in noisy play;
Beneath yon fruitful orchard's shade,—leant o'er the old green gate,
The farmer with his neighbour chats, till, wending homeward late,
In straggling groups the reapers pass; while the red harvest moon
Smiles through the apple-boughs, and sleep will fold the farmstead soon.

But most I love the autumn scene, when morning, veil'd in white,
Steps o'er the landscape gay, and sheds a soft and mellow light
O'er tinted groves, and mossy slopes, and heather-purpled hills,
While, here and there, a lingering bird its lonely matin trills.
With saffron and with scarlet deck'd, in deep contrasting hues,
How beautiful the garden-bower, broidered with silvery dews.

The moods of all the seasons seem in autumn strangely met,
And every hue the year can boast, blends in her coronet;
Away! to climb with buoyant step the breezy mountain-side,
While light and shade, with linkèd hands, o'er the painted prospect glide;

For 'tis a passing glory all, and storm-bells soon will mourn
O'er faded flowers, and fallen leaves, of life and beauty shorn.

O! in the wailing autumn e'en, when doors and casements creak,
And leaden skies look scowling down on landscape bare and bleak,
'Tis rare delight o'er olden page of poesy to pore,
While brightly glows the hearth, and winds aloud in chimney roar:
Home sweeter seems while howls the storm; but, when ye bend the knee,
Forget not those afar who perils brave by land or sea.

Bagslate. M. T.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

October 11.—SECT. V., QUEST. XIX.

Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe.

WHEN this venerable Minister was ninety years old, he had the misfortune to break his leg. It was not then very likely that he would ever have the opportunity of entering any earthly sanctuary again. But Mr. Sutcliffe recovered, and was once more seen in the house of prayer. The infirmities of extreme old age prevented his having so much comfort in these outward means of grace as he once enjoyed; but the aged saint prized the ordinances of God's house, and desired to take part therein until summoned to the heavenly temple. He was enabled even to preach after the occurrence of the accident just referred to. But, when Mr. Sutcliffe could not preach, he could listen, and pray, and praise. When this holy man was in his ninety-third year he received, as usual, the annual "Stations" of the Ministers. He spread the paper before his God in secret prayer, and did not finally lay it aside until he had mentioned the name of each Minister, praying that God's blessing might rest upon him, rendering his labours successful. When the Conference next assembled, this father in Israel had entered his rest.

Oct. 18.—SECT. V., QUEST. XX.

The Dead Bird.

A LITTLE boy had been taught to repeat the Lord's prayer. One evening, when he was six years old, he was unwilling to use these words as he had been accustomed to do. His mother was surprised at this unwillingness. At length, when the little fellow persisted in declining to utter the words with which all knew him to be very familiar, his mother was much grieved, and required to know the occasion of this strange behaviour. The child was somewhat unwilling to explain the reason. At length his mother succeeded in eliciting it. Her little boy told her, with much sorrow, that he was sure he could not say "Thy will be done" from his heart. He had possessed and greatly prized a bird. During that day his favourite had died, and he could not submit. We must hope that the child learned resignation. But it is apparent that he had thought of what he said when praying.

Oct. 25.—SECT. V., QUEST. XXI.

A Dying Mother's Question.

A YOUNG man in America had left the home of his parents to push his way in the world. He felt the restraints of religion to be irksome; and he therefore readily listened to those who affirmed that the creed of the Christian was untrue. Still during his vicious course he could never forget the tenderness and loveliness of his mother's character. He received intelligence of her alarming illness, and hastened homeward. His sister received him, and led him gently to the chamber where their loved mother lay. She appeared to be insensible, and passing away. As the young man sorrowfully gazed on her pale face, a smile passed over it. Then the lips moved: "I come! I come!

'Hark! they whisper; angels say,
Sister spirit, come away!'

I come! to join your everlasting songs." The dying saint opened her eyes, and beheld her son. She welcomed him, and conversed with him a little, as well as she could. "Do you wish your mother to die a believer in the dark creed of infidelity?" Soon she died triumphing in the faith of

Christ. Her son thenceforth professed, and tried to honour, that faith.

November 1.—Sect. V., Quest. XXII.

(*First Commandment.*)

An Idol in East Yorkshire.

A woman living in a village in the East-Riding of Yorkshire went to the nearest market-town one Saturday. She had occasion to speak to the manager of a bank. Whilst waiting until he was at liberty to attend to her, she observed what was going on. When the manager had leisure to wait on her, and their little business-transaction had been completed, she said: "I see you take care of other people's money for them." "We do!" "Is it quite safe?" "Perfectly!" "Nobody could break into those iron boxes?" "No, my good woman. Besides, the money becomes more. We give interest." "I wish our Thomas would bring his money here. I am frightened at night lest we should be robbed and murdered." The manager gave her suitable advice. Next Saturday the good woman and her husband appeared, and deposited the money. Very shortly, however, the woman went, and gave notice of withdrawal. "Are you afraid the bank will break?" "No. I am sorry enough to have it home again. But our Thomas is miserable about it. He cannot be satisfied unless he has it to look at and count over." The money was Thomas's idol.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

Oct. 11.—Sect. VIII., Quest. XV.

(*Concluded.*)

Sustained amid Temptation.

Learn the texts of Scripture appended to the reply. Then let us consider how we may obtain sufficient strength and help when temptation is very powerful. In answer to prayer we may often be screened from temptation. Yet, at times, it may seem best to God that our fidelity should be severely tested. In that case, we must, humbly, and earnestly, and trustfully, look to Him for power and aid.

Religion amid wicked associates.—We read of a lad who began to serve God, and led a very holy life, though in constant intercourse with two wicked young men. The father of the young men was a priest, and the lad was an assistant in the tabernacle-service. The young men, though worthless and vicious, did for a time engage in priestly offices. Name the lad,—the priest,—his sons. Samuel would not have acted wisely if he had chosen Hophni and Phinehas for companions. But God kept Samuel in the path of duty. (1 Sam. iii.)

Religion in a godless home.—We have much cause for thankfulness, if we have parents who endeavour to lead us into the way of life, and afterwards to direct us along that way. But we need not despair, though such privilege has not been granted to us. Hezekiah was one of the best kings that ever reigned over Judah. What king sent an army to besiege Jerusalem during Hezekiah's reign? What general commanded the army sent by Sennacherib? What became of the Assyrian army which was under Rabshakeh's command. God delivered Hezekiah because he was good. Had Hezekiah a pious father? What was his father's name? Of what sins was Ahaz especially guilty? (2 Kings xvi. 2—4; 10—16.) No doubt Hezekiah, when a child, would be exposed to many temptations, yet the Lord kept him from the evil.

Exercises.—Are those who pray ever exposed to severe temptation? Why does God allow His people to be tempted? Can we possibly avoid being tempted? How can we be kept safe amid severe temptation? Will God's grace always prove sufficient?

Oct. 18.—Sect. VIII., Quest. XVI.

The Doxology.

Learn the reply without the texts. This part of the Lord's Prayer is frequently spoken of as "The Doxology." The word "Doxology" is derived from two Greek words, one of which means "glory," and the other "to speak." So the entire word means to declare the glory of God. It is applied to the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, because we therein declare God's glory. Having presented the important requests at the throne of grace, on which we have been dwelling, we ascribe all honour to the Great King as we leave His throne.

God's dominion is universal—Who succeeded David as king of Israel? Perhaps Solomon's dominions were more extensive than those possessed by any other Israelitish king. We read:

"King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom." "And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt." (2 Chron. ix. 22, 26, &c.) Did Solomon reign over all the world? Did he know of the existence of America? or Australia? or England? On the far side of the river (that is, the Euphrates) he had no authority. The Egyptians did not regard Solomon as their sovereign. But God reigns over all the world. He reigns in all worlds. He does whatsoever He will, everywhere. "Thine is the kingdom," &c.

God's dominion is eternal.—The Jews, on account of their sins, were led captive into Babylon. What was the name of the king of Babylon at that time? Nebuchadnezzar knew that he was the richest and most powerful monarch then in the world. He adorned and fortified the city of Babylon until it was regarded as the greatest wonder in the world. Then he became exceedingly proud. He was ready to regard himself as more than human. Did he reign for ever? How was his glory interrupted? First he became insane. (Dan. iv.) Then, after a period of restored reason, he died. God will always rule over all. "For ever and ever."

EXERCISES.—Over whom does God reign? Is there anything which God cannot control? Are there any other worlds besides this over which God rules? Does any day or hour come wherein God ceases to rule? How long will God's absolute sovereignty continue?

Oct. 25.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. XVI.

(*Concluded.*)

Hearty Assent.

Commit the texts of Scripture to memory. Then we have something to learn respecting the very last word in the Lord's Prayer. When we use the word "Amen," we mean, "Let it be so." We give our hearty assent to what has been asked. In Christ's addresses the same word often occurs; but, for the sake of distinction, it has been translated, "Verily." (John iii. 3, 5; v. 24, 25.) When Christ thus prefixes the word to some lesson He is about to teach, it is that we may remember that it will prove absolutely true, and may know that it is exceedingly important. When we say, "Amen," after a petition, it signifies our hearty assent.

Amen uttered by a solemn assembly.—The Lord directed Moses that, when the children of Israel had entered the Promised Land, the results of obedience and disobedience should be publicly declared in a very solemn manner. The people, ranged on two hills, were to respond, and say, "Amen." (Deut. xxvii. 11, 26; Josh. viii. 30, 35.)

Amen uttered by a loyal general.—When David was very old and feeble, an attempt was made to set aside God's appointment concerning his successor. David, however, declared that Solomon must be king after him. Benaiah said, "Amen." (1 Kings i. 36.)

Amen uttered by a sorrowful prophet.—When the Babylonians were seeking the overthrow of Jerusalem, wicked Jews pretended that they were really lovers of their country, and that Jeremiah, because he reproved the sins of the people, hated them. Jeremiah earnestly declared his wish for the welfare of his countrymen. (Jer. xxviii. 6.)

Amen uttered by a joyous nation.—David, though he was not allowed to build the Temple, prepared a tent for the ark of God. When the ark was placed therein, the people greatly rejoiced. David had composed a psalm, the choir sang it, and the crowd said, "Amen." (1 Chron. xvi. 36.)

Amen uttered by an inspired Apostle.—The latest word in the New Testament is, "Amen." St. John has prayed that "the grace of our Lord Jesus" might be imparted. Then he utters his hearty assent. (Rev. xxii. 21.)

EXERCISES.—How is the word "Amen" translated when prefixed to the sayings of our Lord? What does the word then mean? What does it mean when at the conclusion of a prayer? In what state ought our hearts to be when we use this word?

Nov. 1.—SECT. VIII., QUEST. XVII.

The Apostle's Creed.

That form of doctrine which you have just learned as containing "the articles of your belief," is generally known as "The Apostles' Creed." It is so called, not because any of the Apostles compiled it, but because holy and learned men in the early days of Christianity accepted this creed as containing, in their prayerful and united judgment, the truth as delivered by

Christ's inspired Apostles. Scriptural truth is here accurately expressed.

The Divine Creator.—In what chapter of the Bible is the fullest account of the creation found? Is there any credible account of the creation to be derived from any other source than the Bible, and those books which are founded on the Scriptures? What should we know of how the world was made if we had no Bible?

The Divine Redeemer. — We have already learned much concerning the great work of redemption. In this paragraph of the Creed there are two words which, perhaps, need explanation. By "hell" we are not to understand the place where lost souls are punished; but merely "the invisible world, the abode of separated spirits," of which Jesus spoke to the penitent malefactor on the cross as Paradise. By the word "quick" we are to understand "living." Where is Jesus now? Will He ever revisit this earth?

The Divine Spirit.—The Holy Ghost promotes the salvation of men in several ways. What does He in the hearts of careless sinners? What does He on behalf of penitents? What does He when believers are perplexed? sorrowful? tempted? desiring to be holier? dying?

The Church of God.—By the word "Catholic" we are to understand "universal." By the "communion of saints," the intercourse of various kinds by which good people help each other in the way to heaven. What privileges are mentioned, in conclusion?

Exercises. — By what name are those articles of belief known? Was this creed composed by an inspired Apostle? What are we to understand by the word "hell," when used in this creed? the word "quick?" the word "Catholic?" From what Book do we learn concerning God and salvation?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

A Persian Confessor.

Mahummed Bakur was born at Shiraz, in Persia. His father was a Mohammedan, and instructed his son in the teachings of the false prophet. When the lad was about twelve years old, his father went to Dacca, in Bengal, taking his son with him. The father died at Dacca. Mahummed became acquainted with Christianity, and at length was fully satisfied of its truth, and determined to be a disciple of Jesus, whatever he might have to suffer. He had occasion to go to Calcutta; in that city were some Mussulmen, who greatly hated Christianity. They succeeded in rendering Bakur insensible, by means of a drug. They then took him on board a ship sailing to Muscat. They cut his clothes to pieces, and threw him into the ship's hold. When the vessel got to sea, poor Bakur was treated most barbarously. He was beaten on his head, and on other parts of his body, so severely, that the scars remained for months. He was made to work hard, and had only bread and water for his food. As he persisted in his attachment to Christ, these wicked men tied him up by the arms in the blazing sunshine, and threatened him with severer tortures if he would not renounce Jesus. But God sent deliverance. He had reason to fear that they would torment him until death ensued. But after they had sailed sixteen days, a violent storm came on, and they were obliged to take shelter in the port of Goa. There, in the darkness and storm, Bakur succeeded in letting himself down into a small boat, and got to land. He had to conceal himself, and to endure many hardships before he reached Bombay, and felt safe. But God took care of him. Divine grace had kept the persecuted one from evil, when he was sorely tempted. Bakur afterwards assisted the Christian Missionaries. (No. II., *October* 11.)

The Conqueror's Burial.

William of Normandy overcame Harold near Hastings, and so became King of England. He was crowned as the monarch of this country on Christmas-day, 1066. He became very rich, for he was successful in war; and took as his own the treasures, castles, and lands of those whom he overcame. Some of the spoils he bestowed on the chieftains who assisted him. But he retained much for himself; so that he was supposed to be one of the richest kings of that period. But he had to die like other men. He could not retain his crown for ever. Whilst engaged in fighting in France, he received injuries from which he never recovered. He had ordered the town of Nantes to be burned. His own horse set its foot among the hot ashes, and plunged so suddenly and violently, that William was severely hurt, and died soon after in an abbey to which he had been taken. He had reigned in England twenty-one years. He was buried at Caen. As you may suppose, the funeral was a very solemn and imposing spectacle. But the ceremonies were interrupted by a man who loudly declared

that the late king was a robber, and had wronged him of house and lands. The man cited the deceased monarch to meet him before the throne of Almighty God, King of kings, and answer for his cruelty and injustice. Those who had the management of the late king's affairs were so impressed, that they made suitable restitution to the complainant. How little does human power and glory appear when we think of the Conqueror's burial, and the commotion around his lifeless body. The sceptre had fallen from his hand. God only is great! (No. II., *October* 18.)

Jamie's Corner.

A LITTLE girl was nursing her baby-brother, who was about six months old. I am afraid she was careless. Little James fell, and was much hurt. The mother was out working, in order to provide bread for herself and children. When she returned home she was in great trouble, for she thought her darling boy would die. He recovered, however, but was a cripple for life. The little boy gave his heart to the Lord, and was made very happy. As he grew older he wished to learn to read, and also to be useful. His mother could not afford to have him taught; but there were some kind boys in the next house who spared a little time on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, and gave James such help as they could. Then he was very ingenious, and, with some little instruction, succeeded in making very pretty toys. One corner of the little room was given up to the little toy-maker, and was known as "Jamie's corner." The whole room, though small and scantily-furnished, was cheerful; but "Jamie's corner" was the brightest of all. He was so loving, patient, and thankful. He had what he believed to be almost the prettiest rose-tree in the world. Nearly every month it had a blossom. Jamie watched it grow day by day, and, when the rose was in its prime of beauty, he gave it to some one whom he loved, — his mother, Lucy, or other much-prized friends. Best of all, he had a good hope of heaven. He used to say, "I shall not be a cripple there, but walk up and down those shining streets. No one will call me the 'little cripple.' Nor shall I want my cart when I need to move about." Dear Jamie has no longer to suffer patiently in the corner. He is in the glorious city. (No. II., *October* 25.)

A Kaffir Girl.

A LITTLE heathen girl was one day standing near to her father's kraal. She was thinking seriously, about many things, as little girls sometimes do. All at once a thought entered her heart concerning Him who made all that she saw, and herself too. She knew nothing about these matters, because the Word of God had not reached that land. But she had heard people say there was a great Being somewhere, though nobody knew much about Him. The little girl felt very uneasy, and knew not why. She went home, and told her parents; but neither father nor mother could help her. They said, that it must be the bird of heaven which made the thunder, that had caused her to be so unhappy. They told her to get long grass and thorn-bush, and burn them together, and rub herself with the ashes. She did so; but you may be sure that she obtained no benefit. Many years passed away before that girl heard "the truth as it is in Jesus." She gladly received it. She knew that the Word came from God, because of the salvation she obtained. She declared her full belief in the doctrine set forth in the Creed, and became a consistent and happy disciple of Christ. (No. II., *November* 1.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

October 4.—The Cure for Selfishness.

ROM. xiii. 9: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

1. *Self-love.*—Every child loves himself; we all do so. How does this love show itself? By our trying to avoid what would hurt or annoy us. By trying to get or do what would please us. This love of self is right, and may be a good thing. It is given to lead us to take care of ourselves, to do no harm to body or soul; but if we love ourselves *only*, or more than we love others, it is being *selfish*, and is an evil thing. Yet many do this. Sometimes it is shown in seeking the nicest things to eat or to wear. Some would make every one about them do only what *they* care for. Little children show it in seeking to have all they wish in play; they will join in no game to please others, if they do not like it themselves. Do you like to play with such? Do they make pleasant companions? There could be no

happiness in a home, or school, or any company if all were selfish.

2. *Love to our neighbour.*—Who are our neighbours? Not only those who live near us. Jesus has taught us this by the story of the good Samaritan. What do you remember of that? Then *any one* may be our neighbour. All who need our help, or who are brought near to us at any time. Many think they need love those only who love them, or who have shown them kindness. Some even think it right to hate those who hate or try to injure them. But God's word to us is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself.*" We must be as careful not to hurt or annoy our neighbour as we are not to hurt or annoy ourselves.

3. *The golden rule.*—How may we know how to love our neighbour? Jesus has given an easy way by which even a child may know this. Do to others as you would they should do to you. Are you not sure how to act to your neighbour, or to speak of him? Ask yourself, How should I like to have this said or done to me? Am I doing to another what I should wish done to myself? Would you like another to steal from you? or to say unkind or evil words of you? Here is a simple rule we may all understand. Pray that God may help you to love others as yourself.

REVISION.—What is it to love ourselves? When is self-love wrong? How does it show itself? How should we love our neighbour? What rule has Jesus given about this? How are you to keep this rule?

Oct. 11.—Fruitless Trees.

LUKE iii. 9. "The axe is laid unto the root of the trees."

1. *Condemned trees.*—Have you ever seen men felling trees? They take a great axe, and, with heavy strokes, cut away the trunk, just above the root, near the ground. At every stroke the tree shakes and sways, until at last it falls to the earth with a crash. Will it ever again stand upright, and grow? Will the branches once more put forth leaves and bear fruit? No, it is dead, and cannot live again. Why are trees cut down? Sometimes for their timber, at other times because they *bear no fruit.* When trees from which men expect fruit give none, they are of no use, they "cumber the ground," taking up room which could be put to a better use; and, though for a time they may remain, yet soon they are "hewn down, and cast into the fire."

2. *Wasted lives.*—Men are like trees. Their actions, and their words, and tempers are the fruit they bear. Their life is not given for themselves only, God looks for *good fruit* from them. He expects them to serve Him, to do good to those who are about them. How many live without doing this, or thinking or caring for it! Some even spend life, and use the powers God has given them, in doing evil, and in spreading sin and mischief all around them! Yet they will not live always. As the axe is laid to the root of fruitless trees, so God will surely bring each one to account for the way in which life is used. *All bear fruit,* either good or bad. What kind of fruit is that you are bearing? What tempers, and words, and ways do you show at home and at school from day to day? When once life is past, it cannot be mended. No tree has a second life, and we may not live our lives over again, to do better. But those who have done evil may *repent,* and be forgiven, and bring forth good fruit.

REVISION.—How are trees cut down? why? How are men like trees? What is meant by the fruit they bear? What will become of those who waste their lives? How may those do better who have brought forth evil fruit?

Oct. 18.—The Law of God.

EXOD. xx. 1: "God spake all these words."

1. *The need of a law.*—When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they did not know how to worship God, or to please Him by doing right. They had lived long in a heathen land, where God was not known. They had seen His great power, and the wonderful way in which He had delivered them, but they knew not how to behave to Him, nor to each other. How were they to know this? How does a child know what his parents wish, and how to obey them? His parents tell him. This was what God was about to do for the Israelites. They had no

law, or rule, to guide them; and God knew they needed it, and gave them one.

2. *The giving of the law.*—To do this God came down from heaven upon Mount Sinai. This is a high and rocky mountain, not far from the Red Sea, where the Israelites had passed over on dry land. The people were in their tents in the plain below, and the Lord told Moses to come up on the Mount, that He might speak to Him there. Then there were thunderings and lightnings, a thick cloud covered the mountain, and a loud sound of a trumpet was heard, smoke went up as from a great furnace of fire, and the whole mountain rocked as in an earthquake. At all this the people trembled, and were in great fear, and "stood afar off." It is right to "stand in awe of God." We should fear Him for the greatness of His power.

3. *The law.*—When Moses went up into the cloud, God spake to him all the words of the law which he was to teach the people. The first, and chief part, was the "Ten Commandments." You know some of these. They tell us about God, and how we should worship Him; of the Sabbath-day, and how we should keep it. They teach us, too, how we should act to our parents, and to our neighbours, and to all about us. "*God spake all these words.*" How we should think of them, could we have heard the thunders and the voice of the trumpet, and have seen the wonders of Sinai! When Moses told these words to the people, they all "answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." Shall that answer be yours? "This do, and thou shalt live."

REVISION.—Why did God give the people of Israel a law? Where did He give it? What happened on Mount Sinai? How did the people feel? Why did they fear? What are the Ten Commandments? Why should we obey them?

Oct. 25.—About Falseness.

EXOD. xxiii. 7: "Keep thee far from a false matter."

1. *False matters.*—What are they? Everything is false which is made to seem different from what it really is. If *words* be false, it is *lying;* and "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." If *ways* be false, it is *deceit.* All are wrong in the sight of God, and hurtful to those who do them. There are many ways of being false. Men are sometimes false in their business. Yet "a false balance," like "lying lips," is an "abomination unto the Lord." Children sometimes cheat in play. It is sad to see this in the young. The evil habit will grow strong, and those who deceive their playfellows will in time cheat parents and masters, and all about them.

2. *What falseness brings.*—We have seen what lying leads to. Who would trust those who deceive them? Who would play or work with a liar or a cheat? Masters will not keep such servants. Men punish those who are false to them, in many ways, and thus great trouble comes through falseness in this life. Then, too, worse than this, God's anger is great towards all such. False words and ways are hateful in His sight; they keep away His blessing now, and will bring His wrath in the life to come.

3. *How to avoid falseness.*—What does our verse say: "Keep far from it." Is not that simple? If a serpent lay in your path, or a fierce beast were near, how would you keep from being bitten? Would you go near it, to look at it, or touch it? Would you not "keep far from it?" Do so with every "false matter." Have nothing to do with it. Listen not to false talk. Go not with false companions. Do you remember the trouble brought by "false matters" upon Jacob and his family, and many others of whom the Bible tells?

REVISION.—What are meant by "false matters?" What does the Word of God say of false words, and false dealing? What does falseness lead to? How may we avoid it? How may we "keep far from it?"

November 1.—Confession of Sin.

LUKE v. 8: "I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

1. *The draught of fishes.*—The Lord Jesus had been preaching to a great crowd of people by the Sea of Galilee. He had stood upon the deck of a little ship, and they upon the seashore near enough to hear Him. When He had finished speaking, He told Peter, on

whose ship He stood, to go out further into the sea, and let down the nets for some fish. Now this was hardly the right time of day for fishing, and the disciples had been out toiling all night, and had caught none. So it did not seem likely they would catch any now. Yet Peter said, "At Thy word I will let down the net." They did this, and caught "a great multitude of fishes," so that "their net brake." They called to their friends in another ship, and they came, and both ships were so filled with fish, "that they began to sink." Here was a wonder greater than these fishermen had ever seen. They knew it was done by the wisdom and power of Jesus, and they were astonished, and full of fear.

2. *Peter's shame at sin.*—When he saw all this, "he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But why did he wish Jesus to go? And what made him think of his sin, just then? Because he saw how great the Lord Jesus was in power, and wisdom, and in goodness too, and he was ashamed, and even afraid, to be in the presence of One so wise, and great, and good. Even a child may know something about this. When a father, or any friend, has shown great love and kindness to his little boy, he is likely to think of times when he has been disobedient, or thoughtless, and has grieved his kind parent. So the more we see and think of God's greatness and mercy, the more we shall fear Him, and be ashamed of our disobedience and sin against Him.

3. *Confessing sin.*—It is good to think of our sin, and speak of it? Yes; no one would care to get rid of dirt, and to cleanse house or person, who did not see and know how ill a thing is uncleanness. No one is likely to try to get cured of any disease who does not feel the pain, and know the evil of it. Sin is the uncleanness and disease of the soul. It is only when we know our sin, and feel how guilty we are in God's sight, that we shall go to Him to be cleansed and healed. It is good, too, to confess our sin before God. If we do this, and forsake it, and seek forgiveness, Jesus will not depart from us and leave us in our sin, but will cleanse and heal us.

REVISION.—What did the draught of fishes tell about Jesus? What did Peter say? What did that show? Why did he fear the presence of Jesus? Why should we confess sin? How is sin to be cured?

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.—No. II.

ISRAEL. Genesis xxxii. 28; xlviii.; xlix.
ISSACHAR. Genesis xlix. 14, 15.
SIMEON. Genesis xlix. 5—7.
REUBEN. Genesis xlix. 3, 4.
ASHER. Genesis xlix. 20.
EPHRAIM. Genesis xlviii. 5, 16.
LEVI. Genesis xlix. 5—7.

W.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

73. In 1 Thess. ii. 2, Paul speaks of the treatment he received at Philippi as "shameful" treatment.

74. Luke says that, after our Saviour was baptized with water, and before the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, He prayed. (Luke iii. 21, 22.)

75. Queen Esther established the feast of Purim. (Esther ix. 26—32.)

76. Nehemiah and his friends built the walls of Jerusalem "in fifty and two days." (Neh. vi. 15.)

77. When Joseph stood before Pharaoh, Jacob had reached the age of one hundred and twenty-one years. (Gen. xli. 46, 53; xlv. 11; xlvii. 9.)

78. In Psalm cv. 17—20, there is an account of the treatment Joseph received in prison.

W.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

CHARLOTTE CULLEN.

Charlotte Cullen was born at Nottingham, July 25th, 1842. In the year 1856 she went to reside with her uncle and aunt at Huddersfield, and with them attended the Buxton-road Wesleyan Chapel. She stated, on her death-bed, that she distinctly remembered the strivings of the Holy Spirit when seven years of age, and regretted that she did not yield to them. During a revival of religion in the latter part of 1857, she was again drawn to the Saviour. She, with some of her friends, was induced to join a class, consisting chiefly of young persons, which was formed, at that time, by the late Mrs. Bairstow, and, through the instrumentality of that eminently pious and devoted leader, she was led to Jesus, and found peace in believing. Her respect and love for Mrs. Bairstow ever afterwards were very great; and, with the other members of the class, she felt grateful to God for association with her in Church-fellowship. The kind counsels, the earnest prayers, and the anxious solicitude manifested for their spiritual welfare will never be forgotten by her members, several of whom have already joined their leader in heaven.

After her conversion Miss Cullen was uniformly consistent. She was naturally of a reserved and quiet disposition, gentle and unobtrusive in her behaviour at all times. She avoided levity of speech; yet all who knew her saw that her religion made her happy. As a daughter, she was dutiful; and, for many years, to the best of her ability, contributed to the support of her widowed mother, trying in every possible way to comfort her in her declining years. In all branches of her conduct, indeed, she has left an example worthy of imitation.

About twelve months after her conversion she became a teacher in the Buxton-road Sunday-school; and, with the exception of about a year's absence, caused by the death of a beloved sister, continued in the school until sickness prevented her further attendance. As a Sunday-school teacher she endeavoured to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties she had engaged to perform by accepting that office. Having found true religion, she was very earnestly solicitous that her scholars should also enjoy it; and the love of Christ constrained her to labour zealously and prayerfully for their conversion. Teaching was not an irksome duty to her, but a delight; and it was always pleasing to the officers of the school to notice the great attention that was given her by the scholars during the lessons. She endeavoured to make her teaching attractive as well as instructive, and her scholars felt it a privilege to be in her class.

In August, 1867, through failing health, she was obliged to discontinue her attendance at the school, but hoped soon to renew it. In that, however, she was disappointed. During her affliction she often gave thanks, but never murmured.

The Ministers of the Circuit frequently visited her, and she often spoke of their visits as seasons of great spiritual enjoyment. A few weeks before her death one of the teachers, having called to see her, found her in great weakness, but very happy. She conversed with much calmness of her approaching end, and rejoiced greatly in the prospect of heaven. When asked if she had any message to send to her scholars, she replied, "Tell them I hope to meet them all in heaven: they have been very affectionate and good girls, and it has always been a pleasure to me to meet them. I should like to have lived a few years longer, and seen the conversion of my scholars, if it had been God's will; but He sees otherwise, and His will is best."

On Sunday, December 15th, she told her friends that she thought she should not recover. When asked if she had any fear of death, she answered, "O, no; I have no fear; all is well! Mark you, I have not dying grace yet, but I have living grace; dying grace will be given when it is needed." On Tuesday, January 7th, 1868, being very ill, she thanked her cousin for his kindness, and said, "All

is well! I have no fear." In the evening, though she still suffered acutely, she talked with her friends of heaven, and her bright prospects; and commenced singing the verse,—

"Angels, assist our mighty joys,
Strike all your harps of gold;
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told."

This she repeated several times, saying, "O, that is true! that is true!

'When you raise your highest notes
His love can ne'er be told.'"

She then said, "Mother! sing. Aunt! sing. I am so happy!" When asked what hymn they must sing, she said, "O, anything; but sing!" She then herself sang the first two verses of the hymn commencing,—

"Jesu, Lover of my soul!"

And several verses of,—

"There is a land of pure delight!"

And then her favourite one again,—

"Angels, assist our mighty joys."

And, also,—

"Above the rest this note shall swell,
My Jesus hath done all things well."

Then, referring to a visit of the Rev. Mr. Wood, she said, "You said truly, Mr. Wood, when I get to heaven—

'Above the rest this note shall swell;'

and so it will." Her mother wished her not to exert herself so much, lest it should increase her pain afterwards. "It won't do that, mother," she said; "strength is given to me. I have not been able to sing so much since June."

Speaking of the school and her class, she said, "I wish that they all knew Jesus as I know Him. O! what a comfort to know Jesus so; to know Him as I know my aunt, as I know my mother!" and, turning her face to her cousin, "as know you."

Her strength now seemed exhausted, and the rest of the night and following day was a time of great pain, but also of deep, abiding peace. Afterwards, she seemed to rally a little, but the improvement was delusive. On Wednesday, January 22d, she again became worse, and gradually sank; frequently expressing her firm, unwavering trust in Christ, and Christ alone. On the Tuesday before her death, she looked at her cousin, her eyes beaming with joy, and pointed upwards; then, grasping his hand, she said, "Farewell! William, farewell! I do not think I shall see you again. Don't give up the school, 'work while it is day.' All is well! I have breakfasted here, but I think I shall sup above." But she was yet to linger another day. At noon she said,—

"Not a cloud doth arise, To darken the skies,
Or hide, for a moment, My Lord from my eyes."

In the evening she said, "It is hard work to die. I have so much pain this afternoon, it is agony. Will you pray that, if it be God's will, I may have ease; but only if it be His will?" After a short time, fearing she had made a wrong request, she asked, "Do you think that it is a wrong prayer?" On being answered, "No;" she said, "Well, remember, only if it be His will, not without."

On Wednesday morning, January 29th, 1868, she was very feeble, and about eleven o'clock in the forenoon she pointed with her hand upwards, and whispered, "Going." And thus her spirit peacefully entered into rest. R. R.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

The Rev. John Clulow's Report on Sunday-Schools.

THE Education Schedules furnish evidence of the growth and prosperity of our Sunday-schools. We have now 5,240 schools, containing 102,718 teachers, and 582,020 scholars; being an increase of 103 schools, 2,717 teachers, and 25,518 scholars during the year. Decreases are reported from two Districts only—171 in North Wales, and 193 in Exeter; while in thirty

others there have been increases, amounting to 25,882. Some of these have been so considerable as to deserve special mention; viz., in the Nottingham and Derby District, 1,084; in Leeds, 1,289; in Birmingham and Shrewsbury, 1,714; in Liverpool, 1,910; in the First London, 1,933; in Newcastle, 2,013; in the Second London, 2,160; and in Manchester and Bolton, 3,047. The last-named District has now fully regained the numbers lost in the cotton famine. Cornwall, which last year had a decrease, "notwithstanding the continuance of commercial depression and the emigration and removal of members," has this year an increase of 251; and Edinburgh and Aberdeen has one of 446, or nearly 10 per cent. on the total number in the District.

Attention has lately been drawn to the supposed "diminution of Sunday-school energy" in this country. A high authority says that the Sunday-school "may be pronounced to be at this time in a crisis and a peril. The experience of the existing religious communities in England seems to agree in this. The interest taken in Sunday-schools is less than it was, the number of their pupils has diminished, and questions are raised at this day which would not have been listened to thirty years ago." We are not able to say what is the state of the schools of other denominations, and it may be questioned whether sufficiently full and reliable returns, for arriving at an accurate conclusion as to the number of Sunday-schools and scholars in England, have been obtained since the Census on Education taken in 1851, but the statistics of our own Sunday-schools give no indication of diminished energy, decreasing interest, or declining numbers. It has been assumed that Sunday-schools attained their culminating rate of increase in 1851, and that the number of scholars attending them, if not now absolutely less than it then was, is relatively smaller in proportion to the population; but this opinion receives no confirmation from our own experience, as we have 150,000 more on the registers of our Sunday-schools than we had in 1851, though during this period the schools have had to pass through the trials of a serious secession. It has been calculated, from returns recently published by the National Society, that in ten English counties the number of Sunday-scholars in the Church of England schools has actually diminished from 1856-57 to 1866-67. Our Wesleyan Districts are not divided according to the boundaries of English counties, but they cover the entire extent of the country, and there has been no decrease in any District during the last ten years; in some there has been an increase of several thousands, and in all the largest of any decennial period since 1837, when our present system of educational returns was instituted.

Satisfactory, however, as has been the general progress of the past, and the particular increase of our Sunday-schools and scholars during the year, it is instructive to observe that the greatest accessions have been made in the larger and more important Districts. While in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Halifax, and Newcastle there is hardly a Methodist chapel without its connected Sunday-school, there are scores of chapels without this valuable auxiliary in rural neighbourhoods, where the congregations are threatened with loss, if not extinction, for want of adequate provision for the Christian training of the children, and where, if Methodist Sunday-schools do exist, they are maintained with difficulty, and sometimes succumb to the force of unfavourable circumstances. In the Bedford and Northampton District, "the village schools are struggling for existence; the lack of suitable agency, and the presence of hostile influences being almost fatal to their successful operation." In the Oxford District, though the condition of both Day and Sabbath schools is generally satisfactory, there are 59 chapels, without a Sunday-school. In the Bath District there are 47; in Norwich and Lynn 49; and in Lincoln 68 chapels, without Sunday-schools attached. In the York District a considerable number of chapels have none; one Circuit has 6, a second 7, a third 9, a fourth 11, and a fifth 14 such chapels; the fact is ascribed to "the fear of landed proprietors, the existence of Church-schools, and the feebleness of our Societies." The Report of the Hull District states, that "in one Circuit there is no chapel without a Sabbath-school; in another there are several, in ten others there are no less than 57. From the other three Circuits there is no return. The reasons assigned for their non-existence are various:—"nearness of places where there are schools;" "want of suitable accommodation;" "the existence of schools on neutral ground, chiefly taught by Wesleyans, but reckoned by the Church of England as her own;" but the two principal causes are "want of means for working a school" and "Church influence." In alleging the latter reason, the return from the Goole Circuit says:—"Our school at Garthorpe was broken up three years ago by the clergyman refusing the advantages of the Church Day-school to our Sunday-scholars, and employing a public conveyance to take the children to his own church and school. This is still done." Others complain of bribes being

given to allure the children from our Sunday-schools, or extra fees being charged, if they attend our Sunday-schools, at the Church Day-school. The effect of these inducements is to dwarf the village-schools, and turn them into merely infant-schools, from which the children are lost as soon as they are old enough to enter the Day-school. The existence of facts like these, not in a few isolated cases, but in many, strongly illustrates the need of an effectual conscience clause in the deeds of all Day-schools receiving Government aid as essential to religious liberty. The Whitby and Darlington District Committee, in view of such instances, recorded its conviction of this necessity; and the Norwich and Lynn District repeated its resolution of last year, strongly urging "that Connexional efforts should be put forth to counteract the oppressive influence of clergymen in rural districts in opposition to our Sabbath-schools." The Lincoln District Meeting was "impressed with the importance of additional provision, wherever practicable, for instructing through the week children placed under our care on the Sabbath, especially when it is becoming clearer every year, that no efforts are spared to estrange the children of some parishes altogether from Wesleyan Methodism." The same subject occupied the notice of other District Meetings, and a strong opinion was expressed, that Sunday-school buildings should be adapted for Day-school purposes. Should these discussions issue in any practical effort to open Day-schools in eligible premises, now closed from Sabbath to Sabbath, it will offer the most effectual check to proselytising influences.

A careful analysis of the returns yields some interesting particulars. The ages and proportions of the scholars may be classified thus:—under seven years of age, 132,475—an increase of 8,368, and 22¾ per cent. of the whole; between the ages of seven and fifteen, 351,729—an increase of 12,834, and 60½ per cent. of the whole; above fifteen years of age, 97,816—an increase of 4,316, and 16¾ per cent. of the whole. The additions of the year have thus been fairly diffused over the principal divisions of the schools, and show that the relative numbers have been sustained; but the rapid growth of the youngest class of children renders appropriate classification an indispensable condition of their successful treatment. The very tender age at which they are now admitted, by common consent, will either be a source of weakness or of strength to the school-discipline; of weakness, if they be not provided with separate rooms, and taught collectively by the aid of blackboard, box of letters, or Scripture prints, under the care of experienced teachers; of strength, if they be so trained, as they will acquire those habits of obedience, order, and punctuality which will be of service to them in every higher class, and permanently attach them to the schools. Separate rooms for class-teaching are as much required for elder scholars, who cannot be so well instructed, so long retained, or so pointedly urged to self-consecration to God and His Church, when indiscriminately mixed with children and infants. Light, airy, and comfortable rooms, for schools or classes, are amongst the prime necessities of Sunday-schools at the present time. It has been justly said that "in the early days of the Sunday-school movement, its promoters had to avail themselves of such accommodation as was within their reach. The gathering of the children together anywhere was better than leaving them in ignorance. Places of worship were then the only buildings available for the purpose; but in the present day to provide no better accommodation is one of the surest means of rendering a school dwarfish and inefficient.

The averages have kept pace with the increasing numbers. The morning attendance has been improved by 1,566 teachers, and 13,149 scholars; the afternoon attendance, by 1,846 teachers, and 17,644 scholars. The morning average of teachers is still 43 per cent., and of scholars 49 per cent.: the afternoon average of teachers is 51 per cent., and of scholars, 66 per cent. This is the more gratifying, as to the morning, because a tendency to decline has been noticed in the attendance at that period of the day. I alluded to this last year, and mentioned that the London schools connected with the Sunday-school Union had decreased at the rate of 2 per cent. per annum in the average of the morning attendance for some years. The subject has been considerably discussed at Conferences of Sunday-school teachers in the course of the year. At one of these it was stated that in London, twenty years ago, the average attendance in the morning of teachers was 70 per cent., and of scholars 55 per cent., of the number on the books; whereas now it is—teachers, 43 per cent., scholars 31, of the number on the books. And at the recent meeting of the Sunday-school Union in Exeter Hall, it was reported, that "the statistical returns of the London schools show that only thirty per cent. of the scholars have attended in the morning; being a decrease of one per cent. upon last year." Our own morning attendance in the two London Districts, which, however, include country as well as metropolitan schools, has been 35 per cent., or 5 per cent.

better. Still this is much lower than the Connexional average, and than it ought to be, as the morning is the best time for the schools, and in many, the only time when the children are trained to attend public worship, by being formally taken to the house of God. On every account, the attendance at morning school should be raised. Many means of securing this object have been suggested, but none so likely as the regular and conscientious attendance of officers and teachers themselves. All experience goes to prove that the attendance of the teachers determines the character of the morning school: if they be punctual and attentive, the scholars will be present too, but if they be remiss and irregular in attendance, their scholars will form the same habits from the effect of example.

Some improvements in the organization of the larger schools have been effected by the separation of infants for collective teaching; by keeping senior scholars under the same teacher, instead of removing them according to some rule of age and proficiency; by the formation of Young Men's Associations for theological study or literary improvement; by the commencement of teachers' preparation-classes, sometimes under ministerial superintendence, for a more careful study of the lessons prior to their use; by the adoption of the proposed draft of rules in the management of particular schools, and of local unions of all the schools of a Circuit for mutual counsel and help. These unions have existed in some of the larger Circuits and towns for many years, but they have become more general the last ten years, and bid fair to improve the methods of the schools within their influence. The Bolton Bridge-street Circuit Union was originated in 1828, remodelled in 1846, and has now become the parent of similar associations in the Wesley and Park-street Circuits of that town. In the absence of Connexional rules for such unions, many later Circuit Unions have been formed on the Bolton model. They have been established in Guernsey, Longton, Wakefield, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne this year, and are contemplated in Stoke-Newington, Lincoln, Alford, and other Circuits. Frequent references are made in the schedules to their beneficial influence, in giving the teachers more correct and enlarged views of the work in which they are engaged; in affording encouragement to the smaller schools by systematic visitation and occasional intercourse with the stronger; in promoting a uniform system of school-records, and securing trustworthy statistics; in diffusing information on the theory and practice of teaching; and especially in the general application of Connexional principles. As an illustration of the stimulus which such associations give, we may adduce an extract from the First Report of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Union. It states that "the number of schools, in the Union is 21; officers and teachers, 443; and scholars, 2,904. The average morning-attendance of schools meeting twice each Sunday, is only 38 per cent. of the numbers on the books; scholars in Society and on trial 136, or nearly 5 per cent. These standards, we consider, are much too low. In 10 schools the Conference Catechisms and List of Lessons are used; 2 use the Lessons only, and 1 the Catechism. In these schools nearly 6 per cent. are members of Society, whilst in the 8 schools which do not appear to possess any regular or systematic plan of action, only 1 per cent. of the scholars are members. Nor does this distinction apply only to the town or larger schools, as a comparison amongst the country schools shows that in the systematic schools 3·4 per cent. of the scholars are in Society; other schools return 1·4 per cent.; so that the former appear to be more than twice as fruitful in results, whilst in the larger schools the proportion is still greater. May not the reason of this be that system does not so much spring from largeness of numbers as from a desire to train and govern in the most methodical and effective manner possible? thus energy is put forth, and Work, with its sister, Faith, ensures the approving smile of Heaven." (p. 3.) The Draft of Rules for the management of schools, having been considered again by the Education Committee, will be presented to the Conference, improved by the suggestions received during the year; * and, if that should be adopted, it may be worthy of consideration whether model-rules for Circuit Sunday-school Unions may not advantageously be prepared.

There are 2,016 libraries connected with the Sabbath-schools, containing 500,892 volumes, and having 85,134 readers; an increase of 66 libraries, with 24,142 books, and 2,921 readers. There are yet 3,224 schools destitute of this useful auxiliary, or more than one half of the whole. And it is questionable whether, where libraries do exist, they are made as serviceable as they might be. There are 12,000 fewer readers than there are scholars above fifteen years of age. The return of the Cherry-street Circuit, Birmingham, says that, "Though there are five libraries and 2,894 volumes, it is remarkable that so many volumes should have only 134 readers in the entire Circuit. This may arise from the availableness of libraries

* The Draft of Rules, as amended, was adopted by the Conference.

connected with the town, but it must be regretted that our own literature is not more extensively read. The libraries are not wanting in attractive and suitable books." In the Manchester District "the number of scholars who avail themselves of the school-libraries is very low; not more than one scholar in seven is reported as a reader. It was felt that this fact needs looking to forthwith." The supply of good reading to our Sunday-scholars is second in importance only to the communication of the power to read; and care should be taken to extend the privilege of using the library-books as widely as possible. Some startling revelations of the extent to which trashy, sensational books and serials are read by the young, suggesting and leading to the commission of crime, have been made during the year, the antidote to which can only be found in the free circulation of pure literature, and in familiarising the minds of our scholars with better books before they are exposed to the seductive influences of such infamous publications. Special notice was taken in the Lincoln District Meeting of the inadequate provision for supplying the children and teachers with books for reading, and it was thought that, "if the managers of schools, instead of spending so much money annually in 'rewards,' would devote some of their surplus funds to the formation of good libraries, much more permanent benefit would be the result."

4,410 schools, or sixty-seven more than last year, are reported as using the Conference Catechisms, and 4,617 schools, or eighty-four more, as being regularly taken to chapel.

The total expenditure, exclusive of treats, has been £35,525 2*s*., or £933 more than last year.

The most pleasing figures of all are those which relate to the spiritual results of the year's labours, and they call for devout thankfulness to God, "who giveth the increase." The number of teachers, who are also members of Society, is 76,702—an increase of 3,147; of scholars in select-classes for religious improvement, 17,676—an increase of 1,243; of young persons not Sabbath-scholars, who are in Bible or Catechumen classes, conducted by Ministers, 9,325; and by others, 6,517—an increase upon the two of 5,172; of scholars in Society, 36,944—an increase of 4,046. The only decreases, to the number of 59, have occurred in three Districts; whilst increases in the remaining 29 Districts have amounted to 4,103. Several Districts have been favoured with "showers of blessing." All the Circuits but three in the Newcastle District returned an increase of members from the scholars, and a total of 607; the Manchester and Bolton District reports one of 666; the Whitby and Darlington District recorded its gratitude "to find an almost universal improvement, there being an aggregate increase of 945 scholars, 352 teachers, and 232 scholars in Society;" and the Liverpool Districts expressed thankfulness that "large numbers of young persons connected with the schools had been led to decision for Christ, and enrolled as members of the Church." All kinds of scholars, as well as teachers, have shared in the blessing. At Faversham, in Kent, "many of the children have been savingly converted; and, as a means to an end, this has been brought about by special meetings for prayer, and by direct and earnest appeals to their consciences;" at St. Agnes and St. Ives, in Cornwall, "many young people and senior scholars have sought and found peace with God;" at Sherborne, in Dorset, "a considerable number of the members of the adult classes have been converted, and become members of Society." At Reeth, in Yorkshire, "a gracious influence has rested on many of the schools, resulting in the conversion of many of the teachers, and producing greater earnestness and spirituality in teaching;" at Dodworth, Barnsley Circuit, "scores of teachers and scholars, long convinced of the reality of religion, have sought and found its saving power, and become faithful witnesses for Christ to all around;" and at Bradford the schools of the Kirkgate Circuit have "been visited by a revival of religion—some in a marked manner, the fruit of which remains." "At Richmond-terrace, the children's classes for religious improvement on the week-day are still full of interest to themselves;" at Lowmoor Chapel school "a serious and tender work began in February, which has extended to the other schools in the neighbourhood, and is pronounced by men of experience the most genuine they have ever witnessed. Scores of the children and elder scholars profess to have found peace with God, and have joined the Society-classes; and from them the savour seems to have spread to the adult population." These and similar instances of Divine approval and blessing may be accepted as the fulfilment of God's own promise: "I will pour My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

[*The remaining portion of Mr. Clulow's Report, as presented to the Conference, will be given in our next Number. It contains some interesting particulars relating to Sunday-schools in Wales and the Channel Islands.*]

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

OCTOBER 4. — Morning Lesson.

INIQUITY AND MERCY.—Psalm xxxvi.

For repetition, verses 7—9.

Summary.—This Psalm is said to be "one of the finest in the whole collection." David writes it as "the servant of the Lord." Only in one other instance (Psalm xviii.) is this designation used. This Psalm presents, in vivid contrast, the character of God and that of man: it "paints, in strong features, the intensity of human corruption;" and then gives a most delightful view of God's bountiful lovingkindness. It closes with the breath of prayer, and with a reference to the certain overthrow of the wicked.

I. "He deviseth mischief." — V. 1—4. V. 1 is very difficult to understand: it may be read thus: "The voice of *transgression* concerning *the wicked within my heart* is this, *there is no fear*," &c.; i.e., "Secretly, to myself, the explanation of his flagrant sins, his deceitful words, is, that he fears not God." Compare Ps. x. 11; xiv. 1. *Before his eyes*,—as a beacon to warn him against the consequence of sinning. V. 2. *He flattereth*, &c.—"He sets such a false gloss in his own eyes upon his worst actions, that he never finds out the blackness of his iniquity, which, were it perceived by him, would be hateful even to himself."—*Horsley*. V. 3. *Iniquity*,—fair enough in expression, but breathing the foul spirit of guile and *deceit*, Ps. lv. 21; Prov. v. 3. *Left off*,—because sin has so corrupted and enslaved him, Rom. i. 21—23. V. 4. *Deviseth*,—contrives and plans wickedness. *Upon his bed*,—i.e., "in the undisturbed watches of the night." *Sitteth*,—strongly determined to carry out what he has planned. *Abhorreth not*,—has no dread of the *evil* he may do to others, or of the sufferings brought on himself by his sins.

II. "Thou preservest man and beast."—V. 5—9. *In the heavens*,—high; infinite; all-encompassing, as the heavens of the earth. *Faithfulness*,—truth, firmly keeping to Thy word, Ps. cviii. 4; Hymn 599. V. 6. *Righteousness*.—Justice. *Great mountains*, (Margin, "mountains of God,") — strong, immovable, and plainly seen. *A great deep*,—unsearchable:—

> "A vast, unfathomable sea,
> Where all our thoughts are drown'd."

Preservest,—guardest against the wicked, and keepest in life. V. 7. *Excellent*, (Margin, "precious,")— as costly a treasure as it is a needful possession, Ps. lxiii. 3. *The shadow*, &c.,—for protection and safety, Deut. xxxii. 11; Matt. xxiii. 37. V. 8. *Satisfied*, (Margin, "watered,") —"saturated, as a thirsty field is, by the showers of heaven." *Fatness*,—a figure to denote "the glorious gifts of God." *River*,—alluding to that in Paradise, Gen. ii. 10. V. 9. *Fountain*,—from Whom *life* is ever flowing, ever fresh; as water flows freshly from its spring. *Light*. —The emblem of wisdom and salvation.

III. Prayer and Confidence.— V. 10—12. *Continue*, (Margin, "draw out at length,") — let the manifestation of it be as lasting as life itself. *Know*,—so as to love, obey, acknowledge Thee. *Upright*, &c.—"Those who have but *one end* in view, and *one aim* to that *end*." V. 11. *The foot of pride*,—the scorn and contempt of haughty men. *Remove me*,—from Thy light, love, and bounty, v. 8, 9. V. 12. *There*,—in the pride of their heart and their sinful ways. *Cast down*,—by that God whom they did not fear.

Reflections.—1. *The true cause of a sinful life is not far to seek*.—Men deceive themselves by saying their transgressions are explained by their circumstances, or the pressure of temptation; but the truth is, they do not "fear God:" if they did, this would

be a bridle to their passions to restrain them from evil courses.

2. *Great sinners are great self-deceivers.*—They think their character is not known, their conduct not observed; and they forget Prov. xv. 3; Num. xxxii. 23.

3. "*The wicked are like the troubled sea.*"—Isai. lvii. 20; ever restless to commit sin, Prov. iv. 16, 17.

4. *What a glorious view of the character of God is here given to us.*—"Mercy," "faithfulness," "righteousness," "judgment," "lovingkindness," bountiful benevolence, (v. 8,) are His; and thus He is the Source of life and happiness. Surely we ought to adore and love Him!

5. *Prayer for the continuance of blessings now enjoyed is our duty*, v. 10.

6. *The destiny of man is in the hands of God.*—Luke i. 51, 52; James iv. 7, 10.

QUESTIONS.—What did David's heart tell him about the wicked? Of what folly is the sinner guilty? v. 2. What are his words? What does he set himself to do? What is said of God's mercy? of His faithfulness? righteousness? judgments? lovingkindness? How are His people satisfied? What is He to them? v. 9. What should we pray for? What will be the fate of the proud?

Illustration.—SELF-DECEPTION.

See v. 2 and Reflection 2. Some years ago a man lived in flagrant sin, known to the whole neighbourhood; yet he was so foolish as to imagine it to be unknown: and, when on his death-bed, he was with difficulty persuaded to make his will, because he could not make that without speaking to his own condemnation.

OCTOBER 4. — AFTERNOON LESSON.

SUBJECTION AND LOVE.—Romans xiii.

SUMMARY. — The instructions of this chapter fitly follow those of the last. We are taught here to honour and obey all that are in authority over us; to keep the commandments, and love one another, as Christ gave us commandment; and to live in watchfulness and sobriety, that we may secure everlasting life.

I. OUR DUTY TO THOSE IN AUTHORITY.—V. 1—7. *Every soul*,—person. *Subject.*—"The word denotes that kind of submission which soldiers render to their officers." *Higher powers . . power.*—"'Power,' in the singular number, is the supreme authority; 'powers,' are they who are invested with it."—*Wesley. Ordained*, (Margin, "ordered,")—"'set in their place' according to the arrangements of His wise, mysterious Providence." V. 2. *Resisteth*,—"sets himself in array against," to "oppose the regular execution of the laws." *Ordinance*,—"the will and appointments." *Damnation*, — condemnation from God as well as man. V. 3. *For rulers*, &c.,—generally, though there are some exceptions. *Afraid*,—i.e., beforehand, so as not to do *evil. Which is good*, — according to the laws under which thou livest. *Have praise*, —be approved and protected, 1 Peter ii. 13—15. V. 4. *Minister*,—servant appointed and sent by God. *For good.* —God intends all government to be for the benefit and blessing of the governed. *Be afraid*,—of the punishment which the laws threaten. *Sword*, —the emblem of authority and war, and the instrument of punishment. *A revenger*, &c.,—an officer to administer that which is justly deserved. V. 5. *Not only*,—through fear of punishment; *but also* "out of obedience to God." V. 6. *For this cause*,—because *they are God's Ministers attending continually*, &c.—devoting all their talents and time to the service of the State for the good of its subjects. V. 7. *Dues*,—what they have a right to receive. *Tribute*,—the tax paid by a conquered province to the Imperial power, such as Judæa then was of the Roman Empire. *Custom*,—the revenue collected from merchandize either imported or exported. *Fear*,—obedience. *Honour*,—reverence. Compare Matt. xxii. 21; xvii. 25—27; Prov. xxiv. 21; 1 Peter ii. 17.

II. OUR DUTY TO OUR EQUALS. —V. 8 — 10. V. 8. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another." *Fulfilled*, &c. — Matt. xxii. 37—40. *This*,—commandment which says, &c. *Any other*,—relating to our duty towards our neighbour. *Briefly comprehended*,—all contained in. This *love* is the essence and source of all social duties; so that, if a man *love his neighbour* as himself, he will never hurt or

harm him, but do him all possible good. V. 10. *Worketh*, &c.,—never produces as its fruit. *Ill*,—evil, mischievous conduct. *Therefore*,—this is the explanation of the latter part of v. 8 and v. 9.

III. Our Duty to Ourselves.—V. 11—14. V. 11, 12. See Illustration. V. 12. *Armour of light.*—Ephes. vi. 11—18. V. 13. *Honestly*, (Margin, "decently,")—"as men that walk in the public and open view of others in the day time," Ephes. iv. 3; Phil. i. 27; 1 Peter ii. 12. *Rioting*, &c.,—luxurious banquets and entertainments. *Chambering*, &c.,—lewd conversation and immodest conduct. *Put ye on*,—seek to have His spirit, imitate His example, become like Him. V. 14. *Make not provision*,—"take no thought" to please your fleshly *lusts*, carnal appetites, corrupt propensities.

Reflections.—1. *God is "King of kings, and Lord of lords,"* 1 Tim. vi. 15.—Our first and chief submission should be made to Him; and submission to all earthly authorities should be made in His name, and as in His sight; "for conscience' sake," knowing that God requires it, Prov. viii. 15, 16; v. 4, 5.

2. *Loyalty to government should be shown by a hearty support of it*, v. 6, 7.

3. *Each relation of life has its peculiar duty; but love is the one principle which prompts to the discharge of every duty in every station of life.*

4. *Christians should ever be "looking for, and hasting unto, the day of Christ."*—How near it may be who of us can tell!

5. *Men have a right to expect in our lives the fruit of our faith in Christ.*—And not only should this be shown by outward sobriety and cleanliness, but also by inward gentleness and contentment: there should be no "strife or envying," Gal. v. 22, 23.

Questions.—What does the word "subject" mean? What are the "higher powers?" How does God "ordain" them? How are we to be "afraid?" v. 3. How are the good praised? Why is one man set over another? v. 4. What is to be rendered to government? what else? What are we to owe to our neighbour? anything else? Why is love "the fulfilling of the law?" How are we to walk? why? v. 11, 12. How are we to "put on" the Lord Jesus Christ?

Illustration.—Christian Watchfulness.

See v. 11, 12. "Knowing the season, which is full of grace, but hasting away. That it is high time to awake out of sleep. How beautifully is the metaphor carried on! This life, a night; the resurrection, the day; the Gospel shining on the heart, the dawn of this day; we are to awake out of sleep; to rise up, and throw away our night-clothes, fit only for darkness, and put on new: and, being soldiers, we are to arm, and prepare for fight, who are encompassed with so many enemies. . . The day dawns, when we receive faith, and then sleep gives place. Then it is time to rise, to arm, to walk, to work, lest sleep steal upon us again. Final salvation, glory, is nearer to us now than when we first believed. It is continually advancing, flying forward upon the swiftest wings of time. And that which remains between the present hour and eternity is comparatively but a moment."—*Wesley.*

OCTOBER 11.—Morning Lesson.

John in the Wilderness.—Luke iii. 1—22.

For repetition, verses 16, 17.

Summary.—St. Luke points out the precise time when John began to preach, and shows that his appearance in the wilderness was in strict fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. He records what John taught the various classes of people who came to hear him; how he answered those who thought he was the Christ; and then glances at the baptism of Jesus, and the imprisonment of John.

I. Time and Manner of John's Appearance.—V. 1—6. V. 1. See Illustration. *Fifteenth year.*—He was *two* years joint Emperor with Augustus; and this was the *thirteenth* year of his being sole Emperor. *Tetrarch*,—properly denotes one who rules over the *fourth* part of a country, or province, but it was also used as a general title. V. 2. *Annas*,—had been high priest, and probably now bore the title; but Caiaphas, his son-in-law, actually filled the office. *The word of God*,—concerning Christ and the preparation

necessary to receive Him, Matt. iii. 2. *Of Zacharias.*—Chap. i. 59—63. V. 3. *Repentance,*—was the duty he taught; and, when observed, *baptism* was administered as an outward sign of that inward and gracious washing which should accompany *remission* or forgiveness *of sins*, Matt. iii. 6, 11; John iii. 5. V. 4. *As it is written,*—Isai. xl. 3—5. *Esaias,*—the Greek form of the name Isaiah. *The voice*, &c.—In allusion to the ancient custom in the East of sending heralds to announce the approach of kings and great men. V. 5. *Every valley*, &c.—A poetical way of foretelling the removal of every obstacle to the advancement of Christ's religion. *All flesh.*—People of every tribe and tongue.

II. Lessons to the Multitude.—V. 7—18.

(1.) *To the Pharisees.*—V. 7—9. *Multitude,*—properly the Pharisees and Sadducees, Matt. iii. 7. *Vipers,*—men of cunning wickedness and "envenomed malice." *Wrath to come,*—the fearful "penalty of sin in a future life." V. 8. *Fruits worthy.*—Margin, "meet for." Show by your conduct that you forsake your false principles and practices, and are truly penitent for your sins. *Begin not*, &c.—Do not deceive yourselves with the notion that your descent from Abraham will be any protection to you against the punishment of your evil doings. *Of these stones,*—pointing, perhaps, to the pebbles of Jordan; perhaps to some among the multitude whom the Pharisees despised. *Unto the root,*—in token of its doom to destruction.

(2.) *To the common people.*—V. 10, 11. *The people,*—those not otherwise described. *What..then?*—They seem to have listened attentively to his rebuke of the Pharisees. V. 11. *He that hath*, &c.—Cultivate a charitable spirit, and show it by charitable acts.

(3.) *To the publicans.*—V. 12, 13. *Publicans.*—Tax-gatherers for the Roman government. *Appointed,*—fixed by the Imperial laws.

(4.) *To the soldiers.*—V. 14. See Margin. *Do violence*, &c.,—in the execution of your duty, or in the attempt to obtain money by threats. *Falsely,*—for the sake of the reward promised to the informer. *Wages,*—"allowance" of meat, money, and perquisites.

(5.) *To all his hearers together.*—V. 15—18. *Expectation.*—Margin, "suspense." *Mused,*—"reasoned," because of the wonderful effects of his ministry. *Latchet,*—"the thong by which the sandal was attached to the foot." *With fire,*—the Pentecostal emblem of the Holy Ghost. *Fan,*—an agricultural instrument for separating wheat from the chaff. *Purge,*—cleanse, or purify by winnowing. *Exhortation,*—instruction and entreaty.

III. Herod's Worst Crime.—V. 19, 20. See v. 1. and Matt. xiv. 1—12; Mark vi. 17—20. *Added yet this,*—a worse crime than any of those for which John had *reproved* him.

IV. "My beloved Son."—V. 21, 22. *Being,*—having been, Matt. iii. 16. *Like a dove,*—the emblem of purity and peace. *From heaven,*—the *Voice* of the Eternal Father Himself.

Reflections.—1. *How the Gospel history commends itself to us by the simplicity of its style; and by the way in which the facts it records agree with the predictions of prophecy.*—St. Luke writes freely about the "fifteenth" year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, and about Annas and Caiaphas, in the full confidence that every one would understand his allusions; and he quotes triumphantly the prophecy of Isaiah.

2. *Conduct is the proof of repentance*, v. 8, 9.

3. *A godly ancestry will avail us nothing if we ourselves are impenitent sinners.*—Ezek. xviii. 20.

4. *Every occupation of life has its peculiar besetments.*—John's advice to the several classes of his hearers implies this.

5. *Christ alone can separate the wheat from the chaff.*—We should pray Him to drive the chaff of sin from our souls.

Questions.—What rulers flourished when John came? What was a "tetrarch?" Who was high priest? What came to John? Where did he preach? What did he preach? Who foretold his coming? What did he say to the Pharisees? to the people? the publicans? the soldiers? to all of them? What great crime did Herod commit? What did the Voice from heaven call Jesus? Whose Voice was it?

Illustration.—tetrarchs and provinces.

See v. 1. Herod the Great left his kingdom to his three sons. To Archelaus, who reigned in Judæa, Matt. ii. 22, but was banished for his crimes, after nine years' reign, when Judæa became a Roman province: Pontius Pilate was the fifth governor that had

been sent. To Herod Antipas, who reigned in Galilee; it was he who beheaded John the Baptist, and to whom Pilate sent Jesus during His trial: and to Philip, who reigned over Ituræa, &c.; regions on the east side of Jordan. Abilene, in Cœle-Syria, was, on the death of Herod, given to Lysanias, a descendant of a former proprietor, from whom it had been taken away by Antony.

OCTOBER 11.—Afternoon Lesson.

MOUNT SINAI.—Exodus xix.

Summary.—This chapter describes the preparation made at Mount Sinai for the giving of the Ten Commandments. God offers to make Israel His peculiar people, and they pledge themselves to obedience. The Lord informs Moses of His descent, and instructs him to prepare for it by sanctifying the people, and by setting bounds about the mount. On the third day God descends with circumstances of terrible grandeur; calls Moses up into the mount, and sends him down to warn again the people not to break through the bounds that had been set unto them.

I. Arrival at Sinai.—V. 1, 2. *Third month*,—after their departure. *The same day*,—as that on which they left Egypt, namely, the fifteenth; or, else, the same day of the month, i.e., the third. *Sinai*.—See Illustration. *Rephidim*.—See Morning Lesson for September 13. *Before the mount*,—the pillar of cloud having led them thither, as God said to Moses, chap. iii. 12.

II. God's Covenant with the People.—V. 3—8. *Went up*,—probably the cloud had withdrawn to the top of the mountain. *And*,—for *the Lord*, &c. *Jacob..and..Israel*,—natural descendants of the patriarch, and chosen to see God face to face, and be blessed of Him, as he was, Gen. xxxii. 28—30. V. 4. *Have seen*,—you need no recital or proof of it. *Eagles' wings*.—The eagle carries her young ones on her wings, and soars high with them, to bear them out of danger: thus this phrase denotes the loving care and strong protection of God during His people's escape and journeying. *Unto Myself*,—to live under My government, to be My special charge. V. 5. *If ye will obey*,—this was the simple condition, but to be strictly enforced. *Covenant*,—the statutes and precepts contained in it. *A peculiar treasure*,—as a costly possession, very dear to Me; more highly prized and cared for than all others, though they also are *Mine*. V. 6. *Of priests*,—a royal body, consecrated to promote My gracious designs among men. *Holy*,—by separation from all others, 1 Peter ii. 5, 9; Rev. i. 6. V. 7. *Elders*,—that they might convey the *words* severally to the tribes of which they were the heads. *Before their faces*,—plainly told and taught them what God said. V. 8. *Together*,—in chorus, as with one voice, to express their hearty and unanimous willingness. *Moses returned*,—into the mount, with the answer of the people.

III. Instruction and Preparation.—V. 9—15. *A thick cloud*,—darker than that which had gone before them, so that they should see nothing but flashes of lightning out of it. *Believe thee for ever*,—as acting under My special authority in guiding and governing them. *Moses told*,—or, had told, &c., so that God declared He would speak to them. V. 10. *Sanctify*,—by making them separate themselves from all common employments and ordinary pleasures. *And wash*,—not only because necessary in itself, but as a symbol of their need of inward cleansing. V. 11. *Be ready*, &c.—Two whole days were allowed for their purification; on the morning of the *third* they were to be fully prepared for the terrible *sight* of the Divine descent. V. 12. *Set bounds*,—"to keep *the people* at a due distance, out of a just reverence to the Divine Majesty." *Take heed*, &c.—A solemn caution, enforced by the threat of a fearful penalty, in order to impress the people with awe of the Divine Majesty. *Not an hand touch*,—not "it," but him; i.e., the man who dares to break through, he shall be killed from a distance by stones or darts. *Soundeth long*,—is drawn out much longer than usual. *To the mount*,—to the foot of it, v. 17. V. 14. *Sanctified the people*,—commanded them to sanctify themselves.

IV. "The Mount that burned with Fire."—V. 16—20. These verses give a graphic description of the glorious manifestation of God: the symbols of His presence were terrible. A dark *cloud*, from which fierce *lightnings* flashed and *thunders* rolled; and a *trum-*

pet, whose *loud*, long blast pierced the soul with terror; the effect was great, well-nigh overwhelming: the *mount* itself shook, *the people trembled*, and *Moses spake*, v. 19, and Heb. xii. 21. The people *stood at the nether*,—at the lowest point of the mount; God came down *to the top* of it, and the distance between was covered with thick darkness.

V. God's solemn Charge repeated. —V. 21—25. *Charge*, (Margin, "contest,")—strive with *the people*, lest they yield to their curiosity, and disobey. *The priests.*—Aaron and his sons were not yet appointed, and these were probably persons who had been recognised priests among the Israelites in Egypt. V. 23. *The people cannot*, &c.—It is absolutely forbidden, and barriers fixed to prevent them. V. 24. *Away, get thee down*, &c.—God saw, what Moses did not, that the people were strongly inclined to *break through*. *Lest*, &c.—For He will surely fulfil His threat. V. 25. *And spake*,—reminding them of the Divine prohibition, and the penalty they would certainly suffer if they dared to disregard it.

Reflections.—1. *God's mercies are meant to bring us into the bond of His covenant.*—Here, God reminds the people of the rich favours He had shown them, and then says, "Now, therefore," &c., v. 5; so St. Paul, Rom. xii. 1.

2. *No higher privilege can be enjoyed than that of being a "peculiar treasure" to God.*—Yet this privilege may be ours. Should we not seek to attain it?

3. *Men need proof upon proof of the authority of those who are sent to them by God.*—God gives yet another to Moses in the mount, v. 9.

4. *We should never appear before God for worship and instruction without previous preparation.*—He says to *us*, "*Wash you*," &c., Isai. i. 16—18; see also Psalm xxiv. 3—5.

5. *God reveals Himself to us, not in terrible grandeur, but in the glory of goodness.*—Heb. xii. 22—24.

6. *Nothing should tempt us to brave God's warnings.* Curiosity and excitement together are very potent to make us forget ourselves; but the voice of the Lord should always subdue us, and save us from folly.

Questions.—How long had the Israelites been out of Egypt? Where did they come from to Sinai? How had God borne them? v. 4. What did He promise them? On what condition? Did the people consent? Why did God say He would speak to Moses? v. 9. What were the people to do? How was Moses to keep them from the mount? What was to happen to those who dared to "break through?" How did God come down? v. 18. What was the appearance of Mount Sinai? What was the effect on the people and Moses? What did the Lord answer Moses? Why did He send him down again? What were the priests to do?

Illustration.—"mount sinai."

See v. 1 and 18. Mount Sinai is called by the Arabs, *Jebel Musa*, "the mountain of Moses:" it is the central peak of a range having three summits. "Near this range there are two plains, which furnish space enough for a large encampment." "Sinai falls towards the south, for about two thousand feet, into low granite hills, and then into a large plain, which is about sixteen hundred feet broad, and nearly five miles long, and rises like an amphitheatre opposite to the mountain, both on the south and east. It is a plain that seems made to accommodate a large number gathered round the foot of the mountain."

OCTOBER 18.—Morning Lesson.

"we live unto the lord." — Romans xiv.

Summary.—In this chapter the Apostle states two vital truths: that we live under the scrutiny of God, and are responsible to Him; and that true religion is, not any outward observance, but "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." From these truths he teaches that we should neither judge nor despise one another in things not essential; but in all things should live in charity, seek peace, and so act as, if possible, to give no offence to any one.

I. "Judge not."—V. 1—6. *In the faith*,—as to what he may eat and drink. *Receive ye*,—to your society and fellowship; with kindness respecting, not laughing at, his scruples. *Doubtful disputations*, (see Margin,)—not for the purpose of keenly discussing disputed points with him. V. 2. *All things*,—even those forbidden by the ceremonial law. *Who is weak*,—through remembrance of the law under which,

as a Jew, he lived before he became a Christian. *Eateth herbs*,—only; so as to be secure against touching meats offered to idols. V. 3. *Despise him*,—"as over scrupulous and superstitious." *Judge him*,—"As profane, or taking undue liberties." *Received him*,—as His own by grace, through faith in Christ, Acts xv. 7—9. V. 4. *Who art thou?* &c.—Thou art not his lord and master on these questions. *His own Master*,—God. *Standeth*, &c.,—is approved, or condemned. *Holden up*,—stablished, so as not to fall into condemnation. *Is able*,—through the light of God's wisdom and the strength of His grace. V. 5. *Esteemeth*,—considers, in the use of his judgment. *One day*,—as, e.g., that on which a Jewish festival was held. *Every day*,—sacred to God. *Let every man*,—keep a clear conscience as to his own conduct, v. 22, 23. V. 6. *Regardeth*,—"observeth" as peculiarly holy. *Unto the Lord*,—seeking to glorify God by his pious observance. *That regardeth not*, &c.—"Acts from a principle of conscience," believing that God does not require any special observance of it. *Eateth not*,—flesh. *Giveth God thanks*,—for his herbs.

II. God is Judge Himself.—V. 7—12. *None of us*,—whatever his views and practices. *To himself*,—his own will is not his supreme law. *Dieth*, &c.,—has no power to fix his own destiny. V. 8 teaches that in life we are under the watchful eye of God, who notes down all we do, and in death are in His hands for judgment. V. 9. *To this end*,—this was the design of God. *Revived*,—fully restored to life. *Of the dead*,—now to keep and rule their separated spirits, and hereafter to judge them and award their doom. *And living*,—to save and govern them. V. 10. *Why judge..or set at nought*,—"despise?" We cannot benefit each other thus, and it is folly, because our judgments may be overthrown, and our contempt of others may return on our own heads. *For we shall all*, &c.—Acts x. 42; 2 Cor. v. 10; so 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. V. 11. *It is written*,—Isai. xlv. 23. V. 12. *So then*,—since God has said this, and given Christ for this very purpose. *Of himself*,—of his own words and actions.

III. "Judge this rather."—V. 13—23. *Any more*,—since it is more likely to hurt ourselves than to help others. *Judge this rather*,—consider this as a far more Christian and sensible course. *A stumblingblock*,—by making him do as thou doest against his conscience. *An occasion*,—to hate thee for what thou doest. V. 14. *By the Lord Jesus*,—through the knowledge He has revealed to me, Gal. i. 11—17. *Nothing*,—neither meat, nor herbs, nor anything. *To him it is unclean*,—so long as he believes it is forbidden by God. V. 15. *Grieved*,—thinking thee unscrupulous, licentious. *Not charitably*. Margin: "according to charity,"—or the rule of love. *Destroy not*, &c.—Do not value thy meat more than thy brother's soul, or more than Christ valued His life, 1 Cor. viii. 11. V. 16. *Your good*,—your lawful liberty. *Evil spoken of*,—be blamed for being the occasion of mischief to others, Gal. v. 13. V. 17. *Kingdom of God*,—true, soul-saving piety. *Not meat*, &c.—Neither eating and drinking without scruple, nor abstinence, is in itself a proof of superior piety. *Righteousness*,—"the image of God stamped on the heart." V. 18. *In these things*,—which alone are vital and precious. *Serveth*,—obeyeth. *Acceptable*,—whether he be a scrupulous Jew or unceremonious Gentile. *Approved*,—as living in the spirit of Christ. V. 19. The high purpose of every Christian life should be to promote *peace*, and so provide for the building up of the Church in faith and love. V. 20. *Who eateth with offence*,—either to his own conscience or to his Christian brother. V. 21. *Stumbleth*,—by rashly imitating thee. *Offended*,—shocked and "grieved" at thy free indulgence. *Made weak*,—by being kept in doubt as to what is right and what is wrong. V. 22. *Faith*,—v. 1. *To thyself*,—"do not offend others by it." *That condemneth not*, &c.,—by excessive indulgence in that which he deems to be pure in itself. V. 23. *Doubteth*,—See Margin. *Damned*,—is condemned by himself, and will be by God. *If he eat*,—what he feels he ought not. *Whatsoever*—"a man does without a full persuasion of its lawfulness, it is sin to him."

Reflections.—1. *Clear, correct views of the essential nature of religion are very necessary to guard us against error.*—We must plainly distinguish between what

is religion, and what may or may not belong to it, v. 17; ch. ii. 28, 29.

2. *Christianity allows much scope for the gratification of man's tastes in the outward forms and observances of religion.*—If we do everything "to the Lord," we are not likely to be condemned.

3. *Wranglings about what is not essential hinder the spread of religion itself.*

4. *How wise it would be of us always to live with a constant reference to the judgment-seat of Christ!*—It would save us both from despising and judging each other.

5. *A single desire to please God will enable us to enjoy full liberty ourselves, and yet respect the opinions of others.*

QUESTIONS.—What "faith" is here spoken of? Why should we not judge or despise each other? v. 4. To whom do we live? Why did Christ die, and rise again? To whom must we give account? What is "the kingdom of God?" What is it not? How may we become "acceptable" to God? What things should we follow after?

Illustration.—"HIM THAT EATETH NOT."

See v. 3. "These were probably Christians of Jewish birth, who so feared lest they should (without knowing it) eat meat which had been offered to idols, or was otherwise ceremonially unclean, (which might easily happen in such a place as Rome,) that they abstained from meat altogether. Thus Josephus mentions some Jewish priests who, from such conscientious scruples, abstained while prisoners in Rome from all animal food. So Daniel and his fellow-captives in Babylon refused the King's meat and wine, and ate pulse alone, that they might not defile themselves (Dan. i. 8—12)."—*Conybeare and Howson.*

OCTOBER 18.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.—Exodus xx. 1—24.

For repetition, verses 8—11.

SUMMARY.—The people having been fully prepared and cautioned again, God Himself, in solemn state and form, gives the Ten Commandments. The sight of the mount and the sound of the Divine voice alarm the people; they entreat that Moses may stand between them and God, and speak to them in the name of the Lord. Moses encourages them, and receives fresh instruction from God, with a blessed promise.

I. THE FIRST TABLE OF COMMANDMENTS.—V. 1—11. *God spake*,—not by Moses, but Himself directly to the people, v. 19; Deut. v. 4. *All these*,—TEN WORDS, or commandments: the first four, called the *first* table, teach us our duty towards God; the other six, called the *second* table, teach our duty towards our neighbour. V. 2 declares His sovereign supremacy: *the* LORD,—Jehovah, the everliving One: *thy God*,—and His claims upon their love and obedience, founded on what He has done for them: *which have brought*, &c. V. 3. *Before Me*,—beyond Me, or, as rivals with Me, or in addition to Me, as minor gods. V. 4. *Graven image*,—carved out of gold or silver, wood or stone, Acts xvii. 29. *Likeness*,—painting or picture. *Heaven above*, &c.,—Compare Deut. iv. 15—19. V. 5. *Not bow down*,—not make even a sign of respect or worship. *Jealous*,—not only as the Supreme, but as the Only God. *Visiting*,—to punish. *Iniquity*,—idol, or image, worship. *Upon the children*,—who will suffer at least those temporal evils which flow from idolatry; as to other consequences, see Ezek. xviii. 14—17. V. 6. *Unto thousands*, &c.—See how God's *mercy* abounds! Only the *third and fourth generation* will suffer through their father's sin, but *thousands* of generations will be blessed with mercy, as being the descendants *of them that love*, &c. V. 7. *In vain*,—in a light, frivolous way, or for a profane or wicked purpose. *Guiltless*,—"not leave him unpunished." V. 8. *Remember*,—this word shows that the Sabbath-day had been appointed before, Gen. ii. 2, 3. *Holy*,—by abstaining from all ordinary labour, pleasure, &c., Isai. lviii. 13, 14. V. 10. *The seventh*.—We now keep the first, because on it the Saviour rose from the dead. *Thy stranger*,—any proselyte to the Jewish religion, or foreign labourer, Neh. xiii. 16—19. V. 11. *In six days*.—Gen. i. *Hallowed it*,—to His own worship and service.

II. The Second Table of Commandments. — V. 12 — 17. *Honour*, — by rendering them affectionate respect, cheerful obedience, and, if needful, care and help, Lev. xix. 3; Eph. vi. 1—3. *May be long*, &c.—A double promise: long life and secure possession of the Promised Land. V. 13. Compare Matt. v. 21—26. V. 14. Compare Matt. v. 27—32. V. 15. *Not steal*,—not even the value of goods, by injuring them, Deut. xxii. 1—4; Eph. iv. 28. V. 16. *False witness*,—saying what is not true of him, either in court to convict him wrongly, or in society to damage his character and business. V. 17. *Not covet*,—so far from actually stealing, thou shalt not foster the desire to possess *anything that is thy neighbour's*, —whether living near or far away: thy fellow-man's.

III. The People stand in Awe.— V. 18—21. *Saw*,— and heard, "sensibly perceived," and witnessed. *Afar off*,—retreated from the mount, rather than pressed towards it, ch. xix. 21; Deut. v. 24, 25. V. 19. *We will hear*,— as though thy voice were the voice of God. V. 20. *Fear not*,—for your lives. *To prove you*, &c.,—to test, impress, instruct you that *His fear* may restrain you from *sin*, and constrain you to obey Him always. V. 21. *And* so *the people*, &c.,—in compliance with the command of God, Deut. v. 30, 31.

IV. The Divine Presence promised.—V. 22—24. *Seen*,— perceived by the thunderings, &c., that it was I that talked, &c. V. 23 is an explanation of the *first* and *second* commandments. V 24 concerns the worship of God in its form and blessedness. *Record*,—"wherever I am worshipped." *I will come*, &c.—ch. xxix. 42—44; Matt. xviii. 20.

Reflections.—1. *We may be guilty of idolatry without worshipping gold or silver images.*—Any thing we love more than God is an "idol in our heart;" (Ezek. xiv. 4;) the rich man's god was his costly clothing and sumptuous food, Luke xvi. 19.

2. *The piety of parents is a rich blessing to their children*, v. 6.—They who have a godly father, or a praying mother, should be very thankful.

3. *We should never use the name of God without reverence both of soul and speech.*—"God is a name my soul adores!" Hymn 568.

4. *The fifth commandment is one we should never forget to obey and keep.*— Prov. i. 8, 9.

Questions.—How does God commend His authority to us? What is the first commandment? the second? third? fourth? What are these called? What do they teach us? What is the fifth? Why ought we specially to remember it? What is the sixth? seventh? eighth? ninth? tenth?

Illustration.—"and my tongue from evil-speaking."

See v. 15, 16.—

"Good name, in man or woman,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse steals trash;
. . . . . .
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."

OCTOBER 25.—Morning Lesson.

good statutes.—Exodus xxii. 22—31; xxiii. 1—9.

Summary.—The moral law of God, which was the subject of our Lesson last Sunday afternoon, is exceeding broad; every commandment comprehends in itself many lesser ones. God condescendingly gave to the Jews, and through them to us, several of these more precise, particular precepts. As to those before us now, the title of the Lesson is very suitable: they are, indeed, "good statutes."

I. Concerning Widows, Orphans, and the Poor. — Ch. xxii. 22 — 27. *Afflict*,—by insult, or injury to their persons, or perversion of judgment. Deut. xxiv. 17; xxvii. 19. V. 23. *In any wise*,—by any means whatsoever. *Cry at all unto Me*,—as the only One to look to for help against oppression. *Will surely hear.* — Ps. lxviii. 5; Jer. xlix. 11. V. 24. *I will kill*, &c.—Your punishment shall be direct from Me, and shall be in kind according to your evildoing. *Your wives shall be*, &c.— 1 Sam. xv. 33. V. 25. *Poor by thee*,— not a beggar, but a neighbour in straitened, distressed circumstances.

Usurer, — one who lives by lending money on interest, and is exacting and hard. *Lay upon him*, &c.,— getting as much interest as thou canst out of him. V. 26. *To pledge*,—as security for the money lent thee. V. 27. *Wherein shall he sleep?* See Illustration. *I am gracious.*—So should you be.

II. Concerning Rulers and Firstfruits. — V. 28 — 31. *Revile*, — blaspheme, or speak evil or lightly of. *Gods*, (Margin, "judges,") — "magistrates;" some, however, understand it of God Himself. *Ruler*, — Prince; or afterwards, president of the Sanhedrim: a man guilty of this crime was scourged three times; if himself the son of a prince, four times. V. 29. *The first*,— "fulness." *Liquors*, (Margin, "tear,") —flowing as a tear from the eye, a "poetical epithet for the produce of the press, both wine and oil." *The firstborn*, &c.— See ch. xiii. 2, 11, 12. V. 30.—Compare Deut. xv. 19, 20; Lev. xxii. 27. V. 31. *Holy men*, — represented as such by the consecration of the firstborn; also ch. xix. 5, 6. *Torn*,— worried, and thus made unclean, Lev. xvii. 15; Deut. xiv. 2, 3, 21.

III. Concerning False Judgment, Enemies, and Strangers. — Ch. xxiii. 1—9. *Raise*, —"receive:" bring out, or entertain. *False report*,—a rumour having no truth in it. *Put not*, &c.,— render no assistance. *Unrighteous*, — giving evidence out of a mere empty tale. V. 2. *Decline after many*,—yield to the pressure of the majority, and echo their voice against thy own convictions, and thus *wrest* — pervert — judgment. V. 3. *Neither*—show partiality for a *poor man* when his cause is unjust, Lev. xix. 15. V. 4. *Gone astray*, —and likely to be lost. *Bring it back*,— and return good for evil. V. 5. *Wouldest forbear*, (see Margin,)—out of hatred to him. *Thou shalt surely*,—overcome thy feeling of enmity, and *help* as if he were thy loving friend, Deut. xxii. 1—4; Matt. v. 44. V. 6 balances with v. 3. V. 7. *A false matter*, — lead to the punishment of innocent persons. *Not justify*, — not approve, but condemn and punish, Rom. i. 18. V. 8. *Blindeth*,— those who otherwise would see clearly and judge righteously. V. 9. *Not oppress*,—by refusing justice, or by harsh treatment, Deut. xxiv. 17. *The heart*, — "soul," "ye know from your own experience in Egypt how a foreigner feels."

Reflections. — 1. *Widows and orphans are the peculiar charge of God.*— Kindness to them is like an act of piety; injustice and wrong to them will be specially punished by Him.

2. *Kindness to the poor should respect his circumstances and his character.*— Prov. xix. 17; but compassion for his poverty must not lead us to encourage him in anything wrong, ch. xxiii. 3.

3. *God giveth man the fruit of all his labour.*—Therefore He has a right to the firstfruits, ch. xxii. 29, 30; Prov. iii. 9, 10.

4. *Tale-bearers are great mischief-makers*, ch. xxiii. 1.—Prov. xi. 13; xviii. 8.

5. *Love to our enemies is to be proved by acts of kindness*, ch. xxiii. 4, 5.

Questions.—Whom are we not to afflict? why? How are we not to treat the poor in lending? What are we to do with his raiment at night? Why are we to be "gracious?" How are we not to speak of rulers? What part of the corn and wine are we to give to God? Which of the family was to be given to Him? What is it we are not to raise or receive? why? How are we to act in judgment? What are we to do to our enemy's ass and ox? Why are we not to take bribes? Why not to oppress a stranger?

Illustration.—"his raiment for his skin."

See ch. xxii. 27: "His 'hyke,' which serves an Arab as a 'plaid' does a Highlander, was probably the 'raiment' here referred to. It is a sort of coarse blanket, about six yards long, and five or six feet broad, which an Arab always carries with him, and on which he sleeps at night, it being his only substitute for a bed. It is very likely that the raiment of the Israelites was precisely the same with that of the modern Arabs."—*A. Clarke.*

OCTOBER 25.—Afternoon Lesson.

"the acceptable year of the lord."—Luke iv. 16—44.

For repetition, verses 33—36.

Summary.—Jesus returns to Nazareth, teaches in the synagogue, and escapes murder.

I. The Scriptures read and applied.—V. 16—21. *Nazareth, where*, &c.— See Matt. ii. 23; Luke ii. 39,

51; John i. 45. V. 17. *Delivered unto Him*,—by the ruler of the synagogue, without whose permission no one could read. *Esaias*,—the Greek form of the name Isaiah. *Opened*,—unrolled. *Found the place*, &c.—Isai. lxi. 1, 2. The Jews well understood the prophecy as spoken of the Messiah or Christ, the Anointed One. *The poor*,—"in spirit," Matt. v. 3, as well as in the things of this life, Matt. xi. 5. *Brokenhearted*,—chiefly through a piercing sense of their sinfulness. *The captives*,—of sin and Satan. *Bruised*,—"worn down and wounded by the weight of their chains." V. 19. *The acceptable year*,—an allusion to the year of Jubilee, which was a type of the Gospel age, with its freedom and blessings. See Illustration. V. 20. *Fastened on Him*,—"intently fixed on Him, waiting to see what explanation He would give of the words." *This day*, &c.—In hearing Me, you hear the Messiah of whom the prophet speaks.

II. Prophets without Honour.—V. 22—32. *Bare Him witness*,—were witnesses of the power with which He spake. *Wondered*, &c.,—from which, it seems, He enlarged on what *He began to say*, v. 21. *Joseph's son*,—as He was commonly supposed to be, John vi. 42. V. 24. *Is accepted*,—acknowledged to be a prophet, Matt. xiii. 54—57. V. 25. *Elias*,—Elijah. See 1 Kings xviii. 1. *And six months*.—In Judæa rains fell in October and April, at an interval of six months; "to the three years, therefore, when rain was withheld *at the usual times*, are to be added the previous six months." V. 26. *Save*,—except. *Unto Sarepta*, &c.—A city of Tyre and Sidon; so that the widow was a Gentile, 1 Kings xvii. 8—10. V. 27. *Eliseus*,—the Greek form of the name *Elisha*. *Saving*,—excepting *Naaman*, &c., 2 Kings v. 14. V. 28. *Filled with wrath*,—because these illustrations taught that He would bestow His favours on others. *Brow*,—"edge" *of the hill*,—called, on this account, the Mount of Precipitation.

III. Mighty Works at Capernaum.—V. 33—44. *Which had*,—was possessed of. V 34. *What have we to do*,—so there were more than one. *The Holy One*,—the Messiah, Dan. ix. 24, 25. V. 35. *Had thrown him*,—or "torn him," Mark i. 26, in proof of his rage against Christ, though he could not resist His power. V. 36. *All amazed*,—at what He did as well as at what He said, v. 32. *With authority*,—so that they are bound to obey. V. 38. *Simon's*.—"Peter's," Matt. viii. 14. *Besought*,—prayed Him earnestly, knowing He had power to cure her. V. 39. *Immediately*,—showing that the cure was thorough, and miraculous. V. 40. *When the sun*, &c.—"When even was come," Matt. viii. 16. *With divers diseases*,—for His "fame" made them believe that He could cure all maladies. V. 41. *Not to speak*,—Margin, "to say that they knew Him to be Christ." V. 42. *Into a desert place*,—"and there prayed," Mark i. 35. *To other cities*,—the adjoining towns, Mark i. 38, 39. *For therefore*,—to spread abroad the knowledge of My words and works.

Reflections.—1. *It is a good "custom" to attend the house of God, to hear His Word read and explained.* In this also our Saviour "hath left us an example, that we should tread in His steps."

2. *The fulfilment of prophecy in the Person of Christ, and the miracles He did, prove His ministry, that He was sent by God, and was God.*

3. "*God is no respecter of persons.*"—He sent Elijah to a Gentile widow, and cured Naaman the Syrian.

Questions.—Where was Jesus brought up? What book did He read in the synagogue? What did he say about the passage He read? What is meant by "the acceptable year?" What did the people wonder at? What did they try to do to Jesus? How did He escape from them? Where did He go? What did He do there? Whom did He cure of a fever? Why did He not stay there?

Illustration.—the year of jubilee.

See v. 19. "The year of Jubilee was the fiftieth year after the succession of seven Sabbatical years, in which all the land which had been alienated returned to the families of those to whom it had been allotted in the original distribution, and all bondmen of Hebrew blood were liberated."—*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

NOVEMBER 1.—Morning Lesson.

FISHERMEN AND FISHING. — Luke v. 1 — 11.

Summary.—Jesus enters a ship belonging to Simon Peter, and, while in it, teaches the people, and works an instructive miracle.

I. Teaching out of the Ship.—V. 1—3. *Pressed upon Him*,—anxious to listen to His words. V. 2. *Two ships*,—fishing-boats, "either at anchor near the shore, or aground." *Washing their nets*, — "after an unsuccessful night's toil." V. 3. *Thrust out a little*, —to save Him from the "thronging" of the people. *Sat down*,—"a common posture with Jewish teachers." *Out of the ship.*—It is probable that this was a small bay or cove; and that, when He was in the boat, the people on the shore stood round Him in the form of an amphitheatre.

II. Successful Fishing.—V. 4—7. *Left speaking*,—having finished His discourse to the people. *Into the deep*,—water, not "a little," as in v. 3. *A draught*,—a catch, or haul, of fish. V. 5. *Have taken nothing*, — so last night's experience gives us no hope of success now. *Nevertheless*,—Thy presence gives us heart, for we know Thy power. V. 6. *Inclosed*,—in the net. *Their net*,—began to tear. V. 7. *Beckoned*,—made signs, as sailors in distress at sea are wont to do. *Partners*, — James and John, v. 10. *Began to sink*,—overloaded with the fish.

III. Astonishment and Abandonment.—V. 8—11. *Fell down*,—as one about to pray earnestly. *Depart from me*, &c.,—not that he desired Jesus to go, but he felt deeply humbled in His presence, and unworthy of the signal favour He had showed him. V. 9. *Astonished*,—all the more because of their failure the night before. V. 10. *Fear not.*—There is nothing to alarm, but everything to encourage in this, for it is a figurative promise of success in thy future occupation. *Henceforth*,—from this very time: this was their call to be Apostles. V. 11. *Forsook all*,—ships, nets, and their sole means of living. *Followed Him*,—obeying His call, in implicit confidence that He would take care of them, Matt. xix. 27; Mark x. 28.

Reflections.—1. *Eagerness to hear the Word of God is a promise of good to those who cherish it.*

2. *The fact of this miracle is vividly presented and strongly established.* — Their fruitless toil the night before told them there was no hope, whatever the reason, and yet v. 6, 7.

3. *Nothing is more likely to make us humble than a signal display of the Divine glory and goodness*, v. 8, 9.

4. *It is well when remarkable success in life's pursuits leads men to consecrate themselves to God and to His cause among men.*

Questions.—Why did the people press on Jesus? What did He do? Whose ship did He enter? What did He say to Peter after He had done speaking? What did Peter say about the night before? Why was he willing to try again? What happened to the net? Why? What to the ships? What did Peter do then? How did Jesus answer him? Who were Simon's partners? What did they do when they got to land?

Illustration.—"thou shalt catch men."

See v. 10: "The Lord clothes His promise in the language of that craft which was familiar to Peter; the fisherman is to *catch* men, as David, taken from among the sheepfolds, was to *feed* them, Ps. lxxviii. 70—72. There is here a double magnifying of Peter's future occupation as compared with his past: *men* for *life*, not *fishes* for *death*."—*Trench.*

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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

GAINING ATTENTION.

THE teacher who fails to get the attention of his scholars fails wholly. There is, and there can be, no teaching where this is not secured. Gaining the attention, however, is not the only indispensable condition. We have seen a class wrought by tricks and devices to the highest pitch of aroused mental activity, fairly panting with eagerness, yet learning nothing. The teacher had the knack of stirring them up, and lashing them into a half-frenzy of expectation, without having any substantial knowledge wherewith to reward their eagerness. With his one-sided skill he was but a mountebank. For really successful teaching there must be two things: the ability to hold the minds of the children, and the ability to give them sound and seasonable instruction. Lacking the latter ability, the scholar goes away with his vessel unfilled: lacking the former, the teacher only pours water on the ground.

How shall the teacher secure attention?

In the first place, *let him make up his mind that he will have it.* This is half the battle. Let him settle it with himself that, until he does this, he is doing nothing; that without the attention of his scholars he is no more a teacher than the chair which he occupies. With this truth fully realized he will come before his class resolved to have a hearing, and this very resolution will have its effect upon the scholars. Children are apt to discern the mental attitude of a teacher. They know, as by instinct, whether he is in earnest or not, and in all ordinary cases they yield, without dispute, to a claim resolutely put.

This, then, is the first duty of the teacher. He must go to his class with the resolute determination to make every scholar continually feel his presence. The moment a scholar shows that the consciousness of his teacher's presence is not on his mind, as a restraining or attracting power, something is wrong. The first step towards producing that consciousness as an abiding influence, is a distinct determination on the part of the teacher to bring it about. Without being arrogant, without being dictatorial, without being or doing anything that is disagreeable or unbecoming, he must put forth a distinct power of self-assertion. He must determine

to make each feel that he is there all the time of the school-duty,—that he is there to every scholar.

In the next place, *the teacher must not disappoint the attention which his manner has challenged.* He must have something of value to communicate. His lips must keep knowledge. He must be thoroughly prepared in the lesson, so that the scholars shall feel that they are learning from him. This is one of their natural instincts; and nothing is more common than to see children hanging with fondness around one who has something to tell them. Let the teacher, then, be sure to have something to say, as well as be determined to say something.

In the third place, *the teacher must have his knowledge perfectly at command.* It must be on the tip of his tongue. If he hesitates, and stops to think, or to look in his book for the purpose of hunting up what he has to say, he will be very apt to lose his chance. Teaching children, particularly young children, is like shooting birds on the wing. The moment you have the child's eye, be ready to speak. This readiness of utterance is a facility to be cultivated. The ripest scholars are often sadly deficient in it; the very habit of profound study being apt to induce slowness. A teacher who is conscious of this defect must resolutely set himself to resist it and overcome it. He can do so if he will; but it requires resolution and effort.

Fourthly, to ensure attention, *the teacher should so place himself that every scholar in the class shall be in sight.* It is not uncommon to see a teacher pressing close up to the centre of the class; so that, if he turns his face to those on one side, he must at the same time turn his back to those on the other. Always sit or stand where you can see the face of every scholar. I have seen the whole character of the instruction and discipline of a class changed by the observance of this precaution.

Another rule is, *to use your eyes quite as much as your tongue.* If you want your class to look at you, you must look at them. The eye has a magic power. It wins, it guides, it rewards, it punishes, it controls. You must learn to see every child all the time. Some teachers seem able to see only one scholar at once. This will never do. While you are giving this absorbed attention to one, all the rest are running wild. Neither will it do for the teacher to be looking about much, to see what is going on among the other classes in the room. Your scholars' eyes will be very apt to follow yours. You are the engine-driver, they are the passengers. If you run off the track, they will do likewise. Nor must your eye be

occupied with the book, hunting up question and answer, nor dropped to the floor in excessive modesty. All the power of seeing that you have is needed for looking earnestly, lovingly, without interruption, into the faces and eyes of your scholars.

But, for the observance of this rule, another is indispensable. *You must learn to teach without a book.* Perhaps you cannot do this absolutely; but the nearer you can approach to it the better. Thorough preparation, of course, is the secret of this power. Some teachers think they have prepared a lesson when they have gone over it once, and studied out all the answers. There could not be a greater mistake: this is only the first step in the preparation. You are prepared to teach a lesson when you have all that is in it at your tongue's end. Any preparation short of this will not do. Once prepare a lesson in this way, and it will give you such freedom in the art of teaching, and you will experience such a pleasure in it, that you will never want to relapse into the old indolent habit. —*American Educational Monthly.*

OUR CHILDREN COPYISTS.

I TOOK up a sheet of my own manuscript; an article hastily scribbled in pencil, and carelessly left unfinished upon my table. The space which I had left vacant, about the title at the top, I found all filled up with writing; and a glance told me that my little boy had been copying the title over and over many times, imitating, as accurately as possible, the bad as well as the good points of the writing.

"You mustn't do so again," said I to the boy, as I pointed to his writing. "Any careless scribbling of mine that you happen to find is not fit for you to copy; it will get you into bad habits of penmanship."

"Why, mother," cried the child, "father said the way for me to learn to write well was to keep practising, by copying all sorts of good writing; and I am sure anything you write is good enough."

"No, my love," said I, decidedly; "I will set you copies whenever you wish; but my ordinary, hasty writing is not for you to imitate. See, now, if I had thought of your copying this, I should have written it thus,"—writing it very carefully. "See how differently it looks from the other!"

"I see," said the boy; "and I will do as you say; but if I get my best as well as your worst, I shall be satisfied."

My son went away, and I sat and thought, not of penmanship, but of matters far more vital to his welfare. Those thoughts were helpful to me in trying to live aright before my child; and, perhaps, they may help others as weak as myself, if such indeed there be.

He is a zealous copyist, this child who sits beside us, and follows our steps from day to day. He must copy something, and he will not wait for that which is carefully set and prepared for his imitation. The ordinary, careless scribblings are what he will seize upon, and imitate, till he makes them his own. By an exercise of authority I could prevent my child from copying my careless handwriting; but it is morally impossible for me to prevent

his copying my careless living. It is the unconscious influence, flowing from us each day, hour, moment, which will form the child's character.

Again, if the child say, "I am sure anything which you do is good enough,"—while the parent may well be thankful for such an expression from his child's heart,—he will do well to remember that, in winning this great treasure of love and trust, he has won with it a responsibility proportionately great.

I have seen a very excellent, loving, and beloved mother standing directly in the way of her children's entrance into the heavenly gate; while mothers, who were openly bad, had no power to keep their children out of heaven. The children of that mother were, one after another, deeply interested for their soul's salvation; but, failing to come out openly on the Lord's side, relapsed, some into indifference, and some into open sin. When the pastor urged the daughter to take a decided stand with those who were saying, "As for me, I will serve the Lord," she replied, "I mean to serve God; but I shall keep my resolutions to myself, and make no professions—that is mother's way; and she is good enough, and a great deal better than I ever expect to be."

The pastor believed that mother to have been for many years a true Christian; but nothing could induce her to profess Christ openly: and her children, seeking to follow the course of her whom they loved and honoured, wrecked the fair bark of religion upon the rock of her bad example.

When a child says, "My mother is good enough," let her not think, "My child is in a place of safety beside me;" but rather search her heart and life by the light of God's truth, and beg grace, in humble supplication at the foot of the Cross, to lead her child in the right path.

Though he spoke but of the handwriting, it started me into these, and many other, earnest thoughts, to hear my child say, "If I get my best as well as your worst, I shall be satisfied."

THE APPLICATION OF LESSONS.

The application of a lesson is that part of it which applies, or fits, to the learner's own heart and life. All moral or religious lessons should have an application; that is, they should be made, in some way, to apply to the scholar's own case, and he should be able readily to see or to feel their fitness. It is not always necessary that a lesson should contain a distinct part called *the application;* for very many good lessons are throughout so strikingly applicable, that the scholar feels their application to himself without any special process of fitting. Such a lesson was the parable of the wicked husbandmen, recorded in Matthew xxi. 33—44, of which it is said that "the chief priests and Pharisees perceived that He spake of them," although no mention of them had been made by our Lord. The lesson which the teacher wishes his scholars to learn may, in many cases, be effectually taught, and brought out with great power, by his questions, illustrations, and pictures, while going through the narrative. But, although I do not think it necessary that every lesson must have a division marked off, to be called *the application*, yet the application must be in the teacher's own mind, and must have a very definite shape there, or the lesson will not be of much value.

But, as the greater number of Sunday-school teachers find it best to write down distinct divisions as applications of their lessons, I will offer three methods of applying a lesson, all of which will be found useful according to the subject taught. A lesson may be

applied, 1. By illustration; 2. By analogy; 3. By direct appeal. I subjoin a specimen of each of these methods of application in teaching totally different kinds of subjects.

Let us take the parable of "the labourers in the vineyard" (Matt. xx.) for an application by *illustration*. The lesson taught in this parable is this: If we engage in the service of God for the sake of getting the temporal reward, the "penny a-day," we shall get that for which we agree; but we shall find that others who serve God in faith, believing that they will receive "whatsoever is right," have as much temporal reward as we; and the inference is that they will have what we shall lose—the favour of God, and a place in His kingdom. Now, to many Sunday-scholars, the above statement would not be very intelligible; it would need illustration. I would give to such the case of Jehu, (2 Kings ix., x.,) who worked for, and obtained, his "penny a-day;" namely, possession of the throne of Israel for four generations: but, as he "took no heed to walk in the law of God with all his heart," he could receive no reward in heaven. I would always recommend that the Scripture characters should be used for illustrations of truth: it gives a reality to the contents of the Bible which even a child can appreciate. But a closer application of the parable could be made by taking the case of a boy or girl who comes to school regularly, learns lessons perfectly, and answers questions well, for no better motive than the hope of a reward from the clergyman or teacher. When such a scholar finds that one with less shining ability, and more retiring manners, is rewarded at all like himself, he will be sure to be jealous; and, if he had the opportunity, he would use language something like that in the parable: "Thou hast made this one equal unto me who have borne the burden and heat of the day." The suitability of these illustrations will be evident if the teacher observes that the parable is an answer to Peter's question, "What shall we have therefore?" (Matt. xix. 27.)

For an application by *analogy*, we will take the miracle of the "raising of the widow's son." (Luke vii. 11—17.) In a narrative like this very much of the lesson will be taught during the progress of the story, the tender love and Divine power of the Saviour being made to shine forth from every verse; but at the conclusion may come a pointed application by analogy in this way: "Each one of you was once as dead in trespasses and sins as this young man was dead bodily; neither weeping mothers nor sorrowing friends could raise you; only the voice of Jesus was powerful enough for that." Then, show how Jesus is continually saying to your scholars, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" and explain that to hear is to obey. But, further, Jesus will really raise us from bodily death: a day will come when "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice;" and whether our waking shall be with joy or with sorrow will depend upon our having obeyed His voice when He calls us now.

An application by *direct appeal* may be made in lessons on some duty, or some particular form of sin. For our illustration let us take a lesson on Matt. xviii. 1—14: subject—Offences. The application will be a sort of pressing home of all the little points of teaching given during the lesson. Thus: Which of you ever causes others to stumble? Who is the idle one who sometimes makes his brother or sister, or, perhaps, one of his parents, late at church through his want of diligence? Who is the careless one who stops the whole class by his inattention? Who is the one who profits so little by his lessons that people say, "It is no use

going to that school: boys are none the better for it?" In this way direct reference should be made to the *offences* known to occur amongst the scholars; and these texts may be read: Rom. xiv. 13; Luke xvii. 1; 2 Thess. i. 6. In such lessons the *direct appeal* should be only a kind of closer application of what has been already applied less personally in the earlier stages. It very frequently occurs that a few words, while the point is fresh in the mind, will go home to the heart of a child more effectually than a studied application at the close of a lesson. Teachers should be ever on the watch for such opportunities, although in their sketch they may have provided for a sort of concluding exhortation. A teacher who takes interest in, and pains with, his lessons, will be able to teach above his rules, and will seize at once any little opportunities that may occur for pressing home to his scholars' hearts a suitable lesson.

Whether an application of a lesson is made during its progress, or at its close, I would suggest the observance of the following rules:—

1. *Let it be natural.*—By this I mean that the application should be one which the lesson manifestly bears. I have heard of teachers who make nearly every lesson teach the same thing. Now, so far as any teacher does this, it is an evidence of his idleness in preparation. But such a teacher's experience ought to show him the defects of this system; the children soon lose all interest in their lessons, and in the Book from which they are given.

Again, teachers cannot be too particular in making a legitimate application of the facts and precepts contained in the Bible. No straining of the meaning of texts ought to be allowed; for we know not what harm is done by perversion of Scripture. In the explanation of types, this caution is particularly needed; and only the most obvious ones should be made use of in Sunday-school lessons.

2. *Let the application be short.*—Like the moral of a tale, the application of a lesson loses strength in proportion as it gains length. Not only is it due to the feebleness of a child's mind that we should observe this rule, but even adults will tell you that a sermon is tedious if its conclusion is very long. A child cannot carry away a very great deal at once; and in the short application of a lesson it is possible that one or two strikingly fitting sentences may fix themselves upon his mind and be remembered; and this, I think, is an important point to be gained. What teacher would not be gratified, on a Sunday afternoon, to find that his actual words of the preceding Sunday's lesson had been remembered, and could be repeated? Yet such a result would be the least likely to happen when the application of the lesson had been *spun out*.

3. *Let the application be personal.*—The favourite exemplar of many Sunday-school teachers is the man whose arrow killed Ahab; and they quote, with satisfaction at its applicability to their own case, the text, "A certain man drew a bow at a venture." Now, I must suggest that this man is not a suitable model for teachers. Because random shots sometimes hit an illustrious mark, it does not follow that riflemen or archers had better not take aim; and because words spoken without any pointed reference to an individual have sometimes carried conviction to his soul, it does not follow that our lessons are the best when their application is directed to no one in particular. The style of the preacher must not be adopted by the Sunday-school teacher. The congregation cannot be individually addressed by name from the pulpit. But a Sunday-school class is a kind of social gathering, and the practice of individualising—addressing the scho-

lars by name, the Christian name—is the one, I may say the only one, which is likely to give him something that will direct him in the narrow way.

The great value of Sunday-school life is the individual and personal intercourse between teacher and scholar: take away this element, and many of the so-called "current objections" to Sunday-schools hold good. So with the lessons: they may be defective in method; but if they are personally applied, many of their defects of form and arrangement will scarcely be recognised. And when I hear a teacher applying his lesson to each individual in his class, I have great hope that personally, and by name, he remembers him at "the throne of the heavenly grace."—*Rev. J. B. Draper, in the "Church Sunday-School Magazine."*

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

A STRANGE HOUSE, WITHOUT ANY LIGHT.

[The facts narrated in the subjoined sketch were entrusted to me by Mr. W. Bell, of Bedlington, Northumberland.—M. E. Humphreys.]

About a year ago I was the teacher of a very interesting class of boys in the Sunday-school. One Sunday a little fellow said to me, "If I could always live in this world, I should be perfectly happy." He was a bright boy, and his fine, dark eyes sparkled as his fancy pictured a world upon which the shadow of death never rested.

"Perfectly happy, Johnnie?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied at once; "if I could have as much money as I wanted."

"Why can you not be happy now?" I asked. "God has given you everything you need, and He will let you live as long as He has any work for you to do."

The child made no answer to this; so I again said, "Why can you not now be happy? speak freely, my boy; don't be afraid."

After a little more hesitation, he answered thoughtfully, "I don't see any use, teacher, in studying, in working, or anything else, when we must die so soon; and what is the good of our loving anybody when, perhaps, as soon as we have got to love them, they will die, or else we shall, maybe?"

"Are you afraid to die, Johnnie?"

"Yes," he replied, in a tone of sadness.

"And why, my child?"

"Because it seems——" said the lad, a strange look being in his earnest eyes; "somehow, it seems like going into a strange house in the dark, without any light."

"And yet, Johnnie, there have been people who were not only fearless of death, but were glad to leave the world. Do you understand how it could be?"

The little fellow looked perplexed, and, shaking his head, said, simply, "No; tell me, please."

"I tried to explain the matter to him, speaking of strong men, delicate women, and even tender children, who, after bearing patiently severe sufferings, fell calmly asleep in Jesus, because they believed in Him. I told him how loving parents had left helpless children in the world without pain, because they believed that God, who had said, "I will be a Father to the fatherless," would be faithful to His promise.

Then, in a low tone, whilst the piercing eyes of the child fastened themselves on my face, I told him how Christians toiled, studied, and lived, in this world, that they might do much

for Christ, and prepare themselves for spending a blessed eternity with Him; and that, while they thus worked for their Master, they feared to live more than they dreaded to die.

Before Johnnie had time to reply, the school was dismissed. I did not meet my class again until the heat of summer had passed away, and autumn, with its withering leaves and laden fruit-trees, had taken its place. Sickness had kept me from school. One day, soon after my return to its work, a note was given me, which I found to be from Johnnie's mother. She said that her little one was ill, and was very desirous to see me. I hurried to the house, and saw a sight which will never be obliterated from my memory. The dying child, whose countenance was perfectly radiant with holy joy, was reclining in his father's arms. His mother, who was convulsively sobbing, sat by his side, holding his little fevered hand in hers. The setting sun illuminated every corner of the room; while a little canary-bird, whose cage hung in the window, warbled forth its sweetest song. It was a strange sound, methought, in that chamber of death. Yet why? Surely triumphant songs were meet when a little frail bark of life was gliding peacefully into the haven of eternity.

As soon as the child saw me, he said, "I am not afraid to die now, dear teacher; Jesus, who was with the martyrs, is right here, and He makes it very light."

I pressed my lips to his cold brow: I could not speak.

"Sing, father!" the little beseeching voice implored,—

"There is a fountain fill'd with blood."

The father endeavoured to do so; but his strong voice failed him, and he ceased. But the mother's tender heart could not let her darling's last request remain unfulfilled, and with faltering tones she commenced the hymn. The first verse she sang alone; but in the second she was aided by her husband.

When they had finished, they looked earnestly at their child. His little face was cold and calm, for, with the sound of earthly songs still in his ears, his happy soul had winged its flight to join the choirs on high; and, methinks, the angels' welcomes seemed but the echoes of his mother's voice.

If any readers of this sketch visit the churchyard at Bedlington, they may see little Johnnie's grave; and on the simple slab, which marks it, may read, "Not lost, but gone before."

My friends! ARE YOU AFRAID TO DIE? Does going into eternity seem to you like going "into a strange house in the dark, without any light?" If so, go where Johnnie went,—to Jesus. He will give you light, for He Himself is THE LIGHT. Do not be content to live afraid to die. Such contentment may give an awful validity to such fears.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS IN THE PAST.

FROM public records we find that Sunday-schools were introduced into Manchester in 1784, soon after Mr. Raikes first established them in Gloucester. The honour of this is due to the Rev. Cornelius Bayley, D.D., an earnest evangelical clergyman, well-known to, and much loved by, the Methodists of those days. He issued an address calling public attention to the need of such schools; and, moved by his appeal, the boroughreeve and constables called a meeting of the inhabitants to consider the matter. This

meeting was held at the "Bull's Head Inn," in August, 1784, when it was resolved to promote this great object without delay. Before the year was out several schools were opened, which year by year continued to increase; and long before the close of the century they contained eight thousand scholars. Aston, the historical poet of the day, sings of their aim and progress in distressing doggerel, thus:—

"But accumulate evil, just heaven soon breaks;
This it did at this time by sending us Raikes;
Who design'd and completed, both by practice and rule,
Th' institution most blest,—the bless'd Sunday-school.
Of the heavenly invention Mancunium apprised,
She seized the advantage, and highly she prized
A method so easily a blessing to give—
The way to live here, and hereafter to live.
Most promptly benevolence cherish'd the plan,
And aided the blessing bestow'd upon man.
The poor saw the value, the worth of the treasure,
And made school their duty, their pride, and their pleasure."

These schools, both in Manchester and Salford,—for they had been introduced into the latter place in 1786,—were managed for twenty years by a joint committee of Churchmen and Dissenters; but in 1804 a separation took place, and the schools were divided into Church schools and Dissenting schools. This movement was brought about by the Churchmen, who became jealous of what was called "the undue influence of the Methodists." Of the management of the Methodist and Dissenting schools of this time we have no certain record; but we have accounts of the management of the Church schools given in the "Minutes of Committee of Sunday-schools, under the Establishment in Manchester." From these we make a few extracts; which show, curiously enough, a state of things peculiar to the times; but which has long since happily passed away:—

"*Star Inn, July* 2*d*, 1800.—Mr. J. B. Bailey in the chair. Resolved: That the clergy of the several churches, assisted by the churchwardens, shall have the whole internal regulation of the schools, the children of which shall attend their respective churches.

"*July* 30*th*.—That the teachers' salaries for the last quarter be discharged. The pay of the teachers to be 1*s*. 6*d*. per day, and the under-teachers 1*s*. per day.

"*Oct*. 29*th*. —That Mr. Walker be requested to call a meeting of parents of the children, and to remonstrate with them respecting their children attending the schools of the opposite party, the Methodists and Dissenters; and to inform them that, if they do so, they must not expect to be admitted again into the Church schools, and that the children of the same family shall not be permitted to attend schools of a different establishment.

"That the [place] of meeting of the committee be changed from the 'Star Inn,' to the 'Coach and Horses,' Deansgate.

"*Sept*. 30*th*, 1801.—Three delegates from the general body of teachers attended to request an advance of wages. Answered: That, should the funds admit, the committee would with pleasure reinstate the teachers in their former salaries.

"*Jan*. 7*th*, 1802.—That, in consideration of the high price of coals, the teachers be allowed 1*s*. extra for firing, for the next quarter only.

"*Feb*. 25*th*.—The committee go back to the 'Star Inn' again. The funds found insufficient to admit of an advance of teachers' salaries.

"*Sept*. 29*th*.—That the committee sit alternately at the 'Star Inn,' and 'Coach and Horses,' one half of the year at each. [This looks like a continuous sitting.]

"*May* 11*th*, 1803.—That the anni-

versary be conducted, in every respect, upon the plan of last year; except that those teachers, who the last year had a treat of bread and cheese, be allowed a dinner, and a quart of ale each person; and to such teachers as do not choose to attend the dinner, the treasurer be requested to pay 1*s.* 6*d.* each, instead."

The writer thinks it to the honour of Methodist Sunday-school teachers that they never received wages for their services; but that from the beginning they have laboured in this good work in the spirit of their Master, "For love, and nothing for reward."

Salford. D.

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

November 8.—Sect. V., Quest. XXII.

(*Second Commandment.*)

Yamaki's Fetish-Tree.

At the entrance to a village in Western Africa there was, a few years ago, a very large and beautiful tree. It was a majestic specimen of the silk-cotton species. The people admired this tree very much. But, alas, they also paid it Divine honours, and regarded it as a god! Yamaki, a chief, to whom the tree belonged, often brought presents of various kinds to it. He would lay gold-dust at its foot, or sacrifice a sheep, or present some ivory. We may be sure that, as the tree could not use these things, the priests would do so. Yamaki heard the Missionaries, believed the Gospel, and renounced all his idols, and among the rest he turned away from this Fetish-tree. Soon after his conversion he built a nice little chapel at his own expense. He said, "I have in past days served Satan, I must now do something for God." He had the Fetish-tree cut down, lest others should be afraid of it. Whilst the men were chopping at it, Yamaki said to it, "I wish I could make you refund all that I have wasted on you." No doubt the gold, and ivory, and sheep would have been useful. But the chief could only act more wisely in future.

Nov. 15.—Sect. V., Quest. XXII.

(*Third Commandment.*)

Dr. Gifford.

One day, among other visiters to the British Museum, was a young gentleman who used much profane language, and who also seemed to think very highly of his own acquirements. He evidently wished to impress those around him with a sense of his learning, and of his freedom from all religious restraint. Dr. Gifford, who was showing the Museum to this party of visiters, was much grieved, yet did not think it prudent to administer direct and public rebuke. The worthy Doctor took down an ancient copy of the Septuagint; that is, the Old Testament Scriptures in Greek. The young man quickly affirmed, "I can read that." Now, the ancient Greek writing is not easily made out, even by accomplished scholars. Dr. Gifford opened the volume, and, finding a passage, said, "Can you read that, Sir?" The young man succeeded in spelling out so much as to perceive that it was the Third Commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name," &c. He was ashamed and silenced.

Nov. 22.—Sect. V., Quest. XXII.

(*Fourth Commandment.*)

The Charcoal-Carrier.

Jacob Freeth was a charcoal-carrier, and every day, during the season for making charcoal, he might be seen trudging along with his loaded donkey, dressed in a black frock, and carrying a stick in his hand. Sometimes as many as twenty mules and donkeys came out of the woods in a long line, every one with a sack or two of charcoal on his back. Jacob worked hard, and he made his donkey work hard too. This was all right on week-days; but now and then Jacob took his donkey into the woods to work on the Lord's day. Now, it happened that a Sunday-school was opened in the village, and Jacob liked the appearance of the children as they went to the school, and wished that his own two girls, who were very dirty at home, were like them. One Sunday morning, as he was coming with his loaded donkey from the woods, he met a

nice little girl reading, and asked her what book she had in her hand. "God's Book," was the reply. "Let me hear you read." The child read where the Bible was open: "Remember the Sabbath-day," &c. "What does that mean?" "That you should not carry charcoal on Sunday, nor make your donkey do so."—Jacob now goes to God's house on the Sabbath, and his girls to school.

Nov. 29.—Sect. V., Quest. XXII.

(*Fifth Commandment.*)

A Curious Advertisement.

A tradesman was in want of a lad to help him in his business. He therefore advertised in the usual way. It would seem that the situation was regarded as a desirable one, for there were so many applicants, that the worthy man was utterly perplexed. He did not know whom to choose from among so many. He therefore sent them all away, and resolved to begin afresh. Another advertisement was issued in these words: "Wanted: a Boy who obeys his Mother." This time the tradesman was not perplexed as on the former occasion. Only two lads applied. The rest were, doubtless, afraid that their past doings at home would not bear any strict examination. The gentleman accepted the offer of one of those two who tried to please their mothers, and were not ashamed to own it. You will not be surprised to learn that the lad turned out well. The curious advertisement had led to a good choice.

December 6.—Sect. V., Quest. XXII.

(*Sixth Commandment.*)

Unhappy Brian.

Poor fellow, his parents were ungodly, and took no pains in training him to know, love, and serve God. Brian grew up in ignorance and vice. He associated with evil company, and became as bad as any of his companions. A number of them agreed that they would rob a house which was situated on a small island formed in the middle of a river. The dwelling was, therefore, very lonely. It so happened, however, that the residents heard the burglars. In the struggle which ensued one of the family was killed, and some neighbours were aroused, who pursued the robbers. The thieves knew that, if taken, they would be hanged; they were, therefore, desperate. Brian reached the edge of the river; but somebody was chasing him. Brian had no time to think; and as he could swim, he unhesitatingly cast himself into the water. But the stream at that spot was very powerful. It was at the lower part of the island where the two branches of the river re-united. The unhappy young man was speedily borne over a waterfall, and drowned. He died with the guilt of murder on his conscience, and thus stood before God.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

November 8.—Section IX., Questions I., II., and III.

Death Reigning.

Our first parents would have had no reason to fear death if they had proved faithful to God. We die because we are of a sinful race, and are sinful ourselves. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.)

Death triumphs over both the strong and the feeble.—Who was the strongest man? The earliest recorded instance of Samson's amazing strength was the destruction of a wild beast that would otherwise have devoured him. (Judges xiv. 5, 6.) What animal was it? What did Samson afterwards find in the carcase of the lion? What other instances of Samson's wonderful strength are mentioned in Scripture? What became of Samson at last? The Lord Jesus healed a man who had been diseased and helpless thirty and eight years. When Christ spoke to the man, he was laid near a pool. Name of pool? What else do you know concerning the pool at Bethesda? (John v. 1—9.) Though so feeble, the man's life had been spared. Though healed by Christ, he must afterwards die.

Death triumphs over both the rich and the poor.—We read concerning a good King who was very ill. He had reason to think that he was about to die. Indeed, if he had not made special prayer to God, he would have speedily breathed his last. God, however, heard his prayer, and raised him from his sick-bed. What was the King's name? Hezekiah was at that time very rich: indeed, for a time he yielded to temptation so far as to be vain because of his wealth but though

he had much treasure, and had been spared from immediate death, he knew that he must die. How long did he live after the sickness just referred to? In fifteen years his throne was vacant. (Isai. xxxviii.; xxxix.) A very poor man was ill for some time. He was a good man, however, and the Lord did not overlook him. At length the angels came, and took him to heaven. Name? (Luke xvi. 20—22.)

EXERCISES.—Was man liable to death when first created? How did he become liable to death? Why are all doomed to die? Is there any way of escape from death? Do any of us know when we shall die? May we die soon?

Nov. 15.—SECT. IX., QUEST. IV.

Death Conquered.

Though death will be allowed for a time to triumph over the bodies of God's people, the saints really conquer at the close of life, and will be fully and for ever triumphant over the king of terrors, in the morning of the resurrection.

Saintly triumph in anticipation of death.—An aged man was writing a letter to a younger man, to whom he was strongly attached. The elder had already lived so many years, that he knew he could not live much longer; but he also knew it to be likely that his death would be hastened by cruel men. Already they had succeeded in shutting him up in prison. They were expecting that he would be speedily put to death. Yet the aged man was happy, and from his dungeon wrote to his friend telling him so. Name of writer? of friend? (2 Tim. iv. 6—8.)

Saintly triumph in the sudden approach of death.—Seven men were chosen to take charge of some money which had been given for the poor. They were all known to be good men and wise; but one was specially and deservedly honoured. Some bad men were, however, enraged because the good man rebuked their sins. They, therefore, induced others to bear false witness against him. One day, when all was ready, they arrested him, and dragged him before the judges. He was allowed to speak for himself, and did so with wonderful skill and courage. His enemies were so angry, that they stopped their ears, and ran upon him, and dragged him away, and murdered him. What was the name of the good man? Most likely, a few days before, Stephen hoped to be spared for years to serve Christ, and lead men to the Saviour; but he was not terrified when he was thus unexpectedly brought face to face with death, in a most terrible form. Sin, the sting of death, had been taken away. To whom did Stephen commend his soul? What did he ask on behalf of his enemies? How is his death spoken of. (Acts vii. 59, 60.)

EXERCISES.—What is "the sting of death?" In the case of good people what becomes of the sting? Will death for ever triumph over the body? When will death's conquest of the body end? Does death, when a saint breathes his last, triumph over the soul?

Nov. 22.—SECT. IX., QUEST. V.

When Christ will Come.

There will be a second advent! As certainly as Christ came to our earth as a suffering Saviour, so certainly will He come as a universal Judge. This He distinctly taught. "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations," &c. (Matt. xxv. 31—46.) This was declared by angels at the period of our Lord's ascension. (Acts i. 9—11.) By St. Paul. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) By St. Peter. (2 Peter iii. 9—14.)

The information given is not complete.—No one can truthfully affirm that he has learned from Scripture, or from any other source, in what year the Lord Jesus will appear for the second time. While Christ was on earth there were those who impatiently began to fix the time. He spake a parable in order to correct the error. "A certain nobleman" went "to receive a kingdom." Was the journey he undertook a long one, or a short one? By "a far country" they were taught that the kingdom of Christ's glory would not appear at once. (Luke xix. 11, 12.) St. Paul had to correct similar impatience. (2 Thess. ii. 1—8.)

The information given is quite sufficient.—God's revealed truth is not intended to gratify our curiosity, but

to promote our salvation. The Lord Jesus taught His disciples that Jerusalem would be destroyed before they had all been removed by death. Did He tell them in what year this would happen? Did He give them information sufficient for their safety when the dreadful catastrophe occurred? The faithful disciples knew so much about the overthrow of Jerusalem, that they escaped. (Matt. xxiv.) We have received so much instruction respecting Christ's second coming that we may be found ready.

EXERCISES.—Will Christ come to this earth a second time? For what purpose will He come? What must happen before He comes? Does any man know exactly when He will come? What ought we to be most anxious about? How must we get ready for His coming?

Nov. 29.—SECT. IX., QUEST. VI.

How Christ will Come.

The suddenness of Christ's second advent.—In more than one passage of Holy Scripture the second coming of the Lord Jesus is compared to the approach of a midnight robber. (1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Peter iii. 10; and Rev. iii. 3.) This comparison is somewhat startling, because there is such a complete contrast between the character of Christ and that of a robber. But this contrast serves to fix our attention exclusively on the lesson intended. There is certainly only one point of resemblance; and, therefore, we can scarcely lose sight of that. Christ is not dishonest like the thief. He is not afraid like the thief. He is not, like the thief, trying to accomplish secretly what he could not effect openly. But both approach in an hour when they are not expected. Christ, however, gives frequent and solemn warning of His intended coming, that we may get ready. He desires that we may be found ready. Were the sinful antediluvians expecting the flood when it came? Were the wicked inhabitants of Sodom expecting the destruction of their city when it occurred? (Luke xvii. 26—29.)

The glory of Christ's second coming.—Was there anything glorious in the outward circumstances of Christ's first advent? Where was He born? From what rank in life were His associates gathered? Had He any palace to dwell in? All was very lowly. But His second advent will be amazingly different. Who will be His attendants then? The angels have such glory as we cannot now conceive; but the brightest of them all will deem it an honour to accompany Christ when He comes. How did the Roman soldiers feel when they saw one angel? (Matt. xxviii. 2—4.) How did Zacharias feel? (Luke i. 11, 12.) St. John? (Rev. xxii. 8, 9.) All the holy angels attend on Christ. On what will Christ be seated when about to judge the world? The "great white throne" will indicate His glory. (Rev. xx. 11.) What changes will take place in external nature? (2 Peter iii. 10, 11.)

EXERCISES.—Does any person know when Christ will come to judge our race? Will His coming appear sudden to all? What is the suddenness compared to? What difference will there be between His first coming and His second? How ought we to prepare for His approach?

Dec. 6.—SECT. IX., QUEST. VII.

The Universal Gathering.

All, whether dead or still living, will obey the summons.—Most will have passed into the unseen world, and their bodies will have mingled with the dust. Many generations will have died. One generation, and one only, will be living. But the men of all ages will stand before the Judge. The bodies of those still living will be changed in a moment, so as to become immortal. Christ, in a moment, removed the disease from one full of leprosy. Those who have died will in a moment be raised. Christ raised Lazarus in a moment.

All, whether gladly or unwillingly, will obey the summons.—No one can hide himself from God. There was once a man who tried to be very cunning. He unlawfully obtained money and raiment from Naaman the Syrian. What was the man's name? Name of Gehazi's master? Was Gehazi's sin perceived by God? No one can be concealed from God. Who was it that first advised that Naaman should apply to Elisha? She was only a slave girl; yet was not overlooked by God. (2 Kings v.)

All, whether now accounted great or small, will obey the summons.—The Apostle Paul was often tried and con-

demned by judges and magistrates. Give the names of two governors before whom he pleaded in Cæsarea. (Acts xxiv. 27.) In what city did the magistrates cause Paul and Silas to be beaten? (Acts xvi. 22.) Paul had afterwards to stand before the Emperor Nero and others. At that time, those who sat on the judgment seemed too powerful to be called to stand at a bar; and Paul seemed too insignificant to succeed in any appeal from the decision against them: yet the Christians and their persecutors must alike stand before the Lord Jesus, and render their account to Him. Very solemn will that universal gathering be. There have been large multitudes on earth; but there has never been anything like that of which we are now speaking. We shall be there.

Exercises.—Will any be living on earth when Christ comes? What change will then take place in them? What change in the bodies of the dead? What portions of the human family will stand before Christ for judgment? Which of us will be there?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Wreck of the Dunbar.

In the pleasant month of May, 1857, the good ship "Dunbar" sailed from England for Australia. The voyage was unusually favourable, until, on August 25th, the ship had arrived in sight of Sydney. During the entire voyage the weather had been pleasant. Not a storm had been encountered. No serious accident had happened: not a sail had been torn, nor a spar broken, nor a rope injured. The passage was regarded as extraordinary. At eight o'clock in the evening, the passengers sat down to take supper together for the last time. Many had become interested in their fellow-voyagers, and felt a degree of regret that they must part. But all were glad that the voyage was over. At ten o'clock, some were gazing at the distant lights of Sydney, and others fast asleep. All was peaceful, and, apparently, secure. Who could have admitted the prediction as probable, that in a few hours all in that crowded ship, save one, would have entered the eternal world; and that, when the sun arose, the bodies of those sailors and emigrants would be floating on the waves, drifted hither and thither? Yet such was the case. Through some error, the ship struck, and foundered; and the crew and passengers, with but one exception, perished. Husbands, with their wives and children, and men far away from their kindred, sank beneath these mighty waters. The "Dunbar," though it had approached so near, never entered Sydney. (No. II., *November* 8.)

"Farewell, Jinnie!"

In August, 1815, the Rev. W. J. Shrewsbury received his appointment as a Wesleyan Missionary to the West Indies. He had much hard toil, imminent dangers, and painful sorrow. Often, during the lengthened period of service allotted to him, had he to weep because of the removal of some who were dearly loved by him. Fifty years had at length passed away since, with youthful ardour and zeal, he entered on his work as a Christian Missionary. He had, at length, been compelled to retire from the full work of the ministry. Among the children spared to him was one, Hannah Jane, who, as the betrothed of a devoted Missionary of the Cross, was purposing to employ her life in the cause for which her father had done and suffered so much. She was the youngest daughter, yet was Mr. Shrewsbury willing to part with her, that she might serve Christ in Pagan lands. But she sickened. During twelve months she drooped as a stricken flower: then she was taken to an early rest. Her sorrowing father had to be supported to her graveside. Death had, apparently, once more triumphed. But even then there was, on the part of the Christian, a real victory, and the pledge of a complete one. The venerable man bent over the coffin and wept, saying, "Farewell, Jinnie, for a little while." Faith could anticipate the glorious deliverance from death which would, in due time, be enjoyed by all Christ's servants. The loved ones were not lost. (No. II., *November* 15.)

The Dark Day.

In some parts of the world, the 19th of May, 1780, was remarkable for its darkness. This was the case in Connecticut. Nobody had expected such gloom. The almanacks had not foretold it. Wise men, and those who wished to be thought so, could talk about the darkness, and explain it after a fashion; but not to the satisfaction of others. Many, not being able to account for the phenomenon, were greatly terrified. The birds of song in the woods were silent. Domestic fowls went to roost in a state of wonder. Gas could not be lighted, for none had yet been manufactured. Candles and lamps were, however, put into requisition. The legislature was at that time sitting, at Hartford. Some members, like many ordinary people, were

convinced that the day of judgment was at hand. Under this impression, the House of Representatives adjourned. It was proposed by members of the Council that they also should adjourn. Colonel Devonport, one of the members, objected to this course. He said: "The day of judgment is either at hand, or it is not. If it be not, there is no occasion for adjournment. If it be at hand, I choose to be found doing my duty. Let candles be brought in." So candles were brought in. (No. II., *November* 22.)

Earthquake at Catania.

SICILY is a beautiful island. Fruits and flowers grow there, which cannot be made to thrive in our colder climate. The inhabitants have much more bright sunshine than we have in England. But they are also exposed to dangers from which we are free. In 1693, an earthquake in Sicily either destroyed, or greatly damaged, fifty-four cities, and a vast number of villages. The city of Catania was utterly overthrown. The residents were busily engaged in their various pursuits, fearing no such catastrophe. All was calm and beautiful. Suddenly the sea began to roar. Mount Etna sent forth immense spires of flame. Immediately a noise was heard, and a shock felt as if all the artillery in the world had been discharged. The birds flew wildly hither and thither; the beasts ran howling in all directions; the sun was darkened; a thick cloud of dust filled the air; men, women, and children were shrieking in terror and despair. Though the shock did not last three minutes, the city of Catania was utterly destroyed, and nineteen thousand of the people perished. Such solemn events may aid us to understand the awful grandeur and terrible suddenness of Christ's second advent. Yet will the feeblest disciple be safe in that great day. (No. II., *November* 29.)

Narraput and the Robbers.

A HINDOO Christian, named Narraput, was on a journey preaching and distributing tracts. He had to pass near a village of robbers. Two hundred banditti were there, under a chief who was the terror of the country. Narraput fell into their hands. They hated him for his Christianity, and they were accustomed to deeds of blood. So there seemed little chance for him. He asked for a pipe. They consented. All understood that he was to be spared a few minutes, and then killed. He knew they would not kill him whilst he was smoking. So he proceeded very slowly, and began to talk to them of the judgment-day. The robbers were impatient, and said, "Finish your pipe." But Narraput did not hurry to do so. He silently prayed to God, and told them how we shall *all* stand before Christ; but how we may be saved through His death. At length they began to weep. Then he felt safe. So he said, "Take your pipe." He continued to preach to them a long time. We hope good was done. (No. II., *December* 6.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

November 8.—Faith and Works.

LUKE v. 20: "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee."

1. *The sick man.*—A poor man lay helpless with palsy. This sore disease had taken away his strength. He could not walk, nor work, nor help himself in any way. His friends were kind, but nothing they could do would heal him. How sad was his case! At length, the friends of the sick man heard that Jesus was in the town. They knew something of His power and kindness, and felt sure that He would be willing to help their sick friend. So they determined to take him to this Great Healer. This man had no strength of his own, and could not by himself have gone to Jesus, however anxious to do so. How good for him that he had friends able and willing to help him! Have you kind friends who show you the way to Jesus, and take you to Him? Be glad, and thank God for this great mercy.

2. *Faith and work.*—The sick man, lying upon a bed, was carried by four men to the house where Jesus was; but it was filled with those who had gathered to see and to hear Jesus. There was a crowd, too, about the door; so they could find no way by which to bring him in. Here was a sad disappointment. Many would have gone back at once: it seemed that these men must do so; but, as they could not succeed one way, they sought another, and at last they took their friend, by the stairs,—which, in that country, are built outside the house,—up to the flat roof; and, breaking the trap-door

wider, they let him down through it, into the midst of the house, before Jesus. All wondered at this strange sight, and what Jesus would do.

3. *Cure for body and soul.*—All in the house saw the weak and wasted body of the poor man, as he was let down into their midst; but Jesus saw another and a worse sight, even the disease of the soul. What is that? It is *sin*. Yet he saw, too, their *faith*. How sure they felt that He would heal their sick friend, if only he could be brought before Him; and, in the greatness of His mercy, He said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." Did this make the man well? No; he lay weak and helpless as before. Was anything changed? Yes; his *heart*, for sin lies there. But even this great blessing was not all he got. The Scribes and others said, "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" They did not believe that Jesus was God. To teach them, as well as to help the sick man, He said, "Take up thy couch, and go into thine house." But had he strength for this? Many times he had tried to do this, and could not; now he tried, and rose from his bed before them all, and went away healed, praising and blessing God! What did this tell about Jesus? Do you know how we are like the sick man? How can we get the soul cured? Do any find it hard to get to Jesus? Think of the faith of these men, and how they strove till they had got their friend to Christ.

REVISION.—How was the sick man brought to Jesus? What difficulty did they find? How did they get over it? What two blessings did the sick man receive? Which was the greater? How may you get the same?

Nov. 15.—The People's Pledge.

EXOD. xxiv. 7: "All that the Lord hath said will we do."

1. *The great congregation.*—Moses had been on Mount Sinai, to meet the Lord, and to hear from Him the law which the people of Israel were to obey. Do you remember what happened there? When Moses came down from the Mount, he called the people together, and told them "all the words of the Lord." They remembered what they had seen and heard, when God came down upon the mountain; the lightnings and the thunder, the thick cloud and the "Voice" of the trumpet, the fire and the quaking of the mountain. As they thought of their fear at the great power of God, they listened, while Moses gave them His message; men, and women, and little children together, all gathered, eager to know what the Lord required them to do.

2. *Their pledge.*—Moses first called all to join in worshipping the Lord. An altar was built, "under the hill" of Sinai, and burnt-offerings were offered upon it to God. Moses then took some of the blood, and sprinkled the altar and the people. Of what other sprinkling of blood would this make them think? Then, Moses "took the book, and read" to this great assembly what God had commanded. As they thought of that terrible night in Egypt, and of their safety then, and of all that had happened since, they "bowed in awe before the Lord," and, "with one voice," said, "All that the Lord hath said will we do."

3. *A resolve for us.*—It was right and wise of the people of Israel thus to resolve and to speak. It would, indeed, have been well for them, if they had kept the promise which they made to the Lord. Yet our next lesson will tell us how soon they forgot this. Have we any word of God to keep? Is there a law for us? Where may we find it? Let us say, "All that the Lord hath said will we do." But how shall we keep this promise? We must hear and learn the law of God; and, if we ask Him in faith, He will help us to keep it with all the heart.

REVISION.—Where were the people gathered? why? What had Moses brought? What did the people say? Of what did they think? How may we keep the law of God? Where shall we find it?

Nov. 22:—The Pledge Broken.

EXOD. xxxii. 8: "They have made them a molten calf."

1. *The broken promise.*—After the promise made by the Israelites, Moses was again called by God into the Mount. This time he was there many days. The people were below, in the plain at the foot of the hill. They knew Moses was with God; they were close to the hill on which God came down, and on which the cloud that covered Him still rested. God had showed them His power in many ways,

in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and on Sinai; and only a few days since, they had there promised to obey His word. Yet they forgot all this; and, when they saw that Moses did not at once come down, they said, "Make us gods, which shall go before us!" Could a god be made? O, foolish and sinful people! Yet Aaron, in fear at what they might do, made them "*a golden calf.*" They called this *a god*, and built an altar, and worshipped the calf with dancing and play, as they had seen the heathen do, who had never been taught of God.

2. *The anger of the Lord.*—When God saw how quickly they had broken His commands, how they remembered not His mercy, and cared not for His power, He was very angry with them. In wrath at their great sin, He told Moses to go down from the Mount, and that He would consume them at once. Do any now forget God's law? Are we in danger of this? How may we avoid it?

3. *A mediator.*—When Moses saw God's anger, he trembled for the people; then he besought the Lord for them. He prayed, in humility and shame on their behalf, that God would be pleased to spare them, that they might repent. Could such a sin, at such a time and place, be forgiven? Yes; God, at the prayer of His servant, turned away some, at least, of His fierce wrath. Do we need a mediator? Have we one? Yes; the Lord Jesus Christ, the One only Mediator between God and man. Yet, though God listened to the prayer of Moses, there still remained,—

4. *A punishment.*—As Moses came down the hill, he heard the singing and shouting of the people as they feasted and danced round the golden calf. In anger he "cast the tables," or flat stones on which God had written the law, out of his hands, and brake them in pieces. Then he destroyed the calf, and reproved Aaron; who, like one guilty, tried to excuse himself, and to put the blame on others. On the next day three thousand of the people were put to death, and "the Lord *plagued*" those who were left. Here, then, is a warning to us. Satan, and evil persons, and our own hearts would lead us into sin. We must "watch and pray," lest we run into sin and danger, as did the Israelites.

REVISION.—What sin did the Israelites commit? Where, and when, was it done? Why was this especially wicked? What did God say He would do? Why did He spare them? How were they punished? What is our danger? Who is our Mediator?

Nov. 29.—The Widow's Son.

LUKE vii. 15: "And he that was dead sat up."

1. *The dead man.*—In a little city of Palestine, called Nain, there dwelt a certain poor woman. She had passed through great sorrow, for her husband was dead. None could suffer such a loss without much grief. Yet, though a widow, she had one great comfort; this was her son, "her only son." But soon even this was taken away. He fell sick, and died. Where could she look for comfort now? It seemed as though none could be had. Her neighbours and friends mourned for her. They could not bring back her son to life. But to show their grief was kind, and might help the poor widow to bear her sorrow better. So, when she went forth to bury her son, "much people of the city was with her."

2. *The Prince of Life.*—This was the Lord Jesus Christ. He had been in Capernaum only the day before, and had hasted through the long journey to Nain. Did He know of this poor widow and her grief? How was this? Many disciples and others were with Him, "a great multitude." As they drew "nigh to the gate of the city," they met the sad company going forth to the burial of the young man. When Jesus saw the grief of the poor widow, He was moved with tender "compassion," and said, "Weep not." Then He turned to the bier on which the dead man lay, and said to him, "Arise!" Could he hear that Voice? He lay bound by the power of death; but there stood by him One stronger than death, and at His voice "he that was dead sat up, and began to speak." In a moment, life had returned: and He gave him to his mother. Here was joy for her! Here was wonder for all!

3. *What the miracle teaches.*—It was a wonder so great, and showed so much of the power of Jesus, that they were full of fear. They "glorified God," by praising Him for sending One so

great and so good among them. They talked of it, too, to others, and spread the knowledge of Jesus to many around. Can Jesus show such power now? He does so with *dead souls*. What are they? The Word of God speaks of souls *dead in sins*. Jesus will raise those who trust in Him from a *death of sin* to a *life of righteousness*. Here, then, is mercy for all who will receive it.

REVISION.—Where did this happen? Why was the widow full of grief? Why were "much people with her?" Who met them at the gate? How did Jesus feel? What did He say? What happened then? What other kind of life can Jesus give?

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA. — No. XIV.

ARRANGE the names you find below,
An answer'd question they will show.

4, 14, 3, 7, 31, 9 — 12, 16 — 2, 5, 30, 1, 3
A sad disease this man endured,
Till by a prophet he was cured.

2, 3, 13, 17 — 8, 15 — 20, 6, 30, 2, 13, 2
Three days affliction brought him low;
He then arose God's work to do.

28, 6, 30, 32 — 14, 4, 22 — 7, 31, 30, 25, 26, 3
Two sisters for a brother mourn'd,
Until the lost one's friend return'd.

20, 26, 21 — 24, 10, 11, 29, 25, 18, 6, 9, 2
People who warnings long withstood,
Their last affliction them subdued.

22, 8, 30, 19, 14, 2
The widows' friend fell sick and died;
For help the widows then applied.

21, 23, 27, 2, 26, 3
A dying prophet told a king
That thrice his bow should conquest bring. H.

BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

79. WHERE have we the first account of a patriarch laying hands on the head while pronouncing a blessing?

80. Some Israelites worshipped the idols of Egypt before the exodus. Prove this.

81. Where have we the first mention of a chariot?

82. Jacob wrestled with the angel, and also wept, and made supplication. How do we know this?

83. What was the former name of Barnabas?

84. When did the Lord command Isaac not to go to Egypt?

H.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

WILLIAM R. JOHNSTON.

William R. Johnston died in Crumlin, Ireland, September 17th, 1867, aged sixteen years. When fourteen years of age he was sent to the Connexional School, Dublin. While there he met regularly in class; and during the last half year of his residence was convinced of sin. Upon his leaving school he went to business in Belfast, where he continued to seek the Lord in the appointed means, until compelled by sickness to return home. Shortly after, while pleading for mercy in private, God lifted upon him "the light of His countenance." His radiant face proclaimed the happy change before he had declared it, and his parents rejoiced with him. From that hour, till his final victory over the last enemy, he enjoyed uninterrupted intercourse with God.

A few weeks before his death it pleased God to take to Himself, at the early age of seven years, his little brother Samuel, an interesting child of great promise. As might be expected, his sudden death made a deep impression on William, and led him to seek for more grace. His parents encouraged him, quoting suitable portions of Scripture, and praying with him. After his mother had said, "Jesus Christ is your Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption," he echoed her assurance with confident faith, saying, "Ah! He is *my* Redemption!" Then in an ecstasy he shouted,—

"'Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain:
The wounds of Jesus, for my sin
Before the world's foundation slain;
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When heaven and earth are fled away.'

O! if sinners knew how easy it is to believe and come to Jesus! O! if sister knew how easy it is to believe!" His parents feared lest the mighty joy should prove fatally too much for the frail tenement of his happy spirit.

During his long affliction he was never known to murmur. When his mother asked, "Would you not wish to get away?" his invariable reply was, "His will! His time! I leave all to His 'sovereign sway.'"

Jesus was all his theme. "Thank God for Jesus!" was his grateful exclamation. A few days before his death, his mother told him that he could not live long. "Why, Mamma," he calmly inquired, "is my pulse gone? I don't feel like dying." "No," she replied; "but your strength is nearly gone." His countenance beamed with delight, and he exclaimed, "Thank God! I'll go to join my little brother Samuel, and my dear uncle and aunts.

To his brother, who had come from Belfast, he gave his dying charge, urging him not to be half-hearted: "Half-religion," said he, "will make you miserable. Live closer to God, and meet me in heaven." Next night he called his little brothers by name; also his sister and cousin, together with the boy in the shop. He spoke to them in an earnest, affectionate manner; saying, in his concluding address to each, "Meet me in heaven." Seeing the servant-maid standing at the foot of the bed, he charged her to give her heart to God; adding, "What would I do if I had no hope now?"

While in Belfast he had a little box, into which he put the half of his pocket-money, "for the Lord." When dying, he left all his money to aid in the work of Christ, saying, "The Lord deserves it; for, if it were not for Him, I would be at the mouth of hell; but now I am at the gate of heaven."

During the last hours of suffering his mother spoke of the dark valley. "It is not dark, Mamma," said he; "death is sweet." When it was thought he was unconscious, she whispered, "Precious Jesus!" He feebly responded, "He is with me!" Thus, cheered by the Divine presence, he

"Gladly died, his God to meet."

"And the parents gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers they most did love;
They knew they should find them both again
In the fields of light above."

JEREMIAH WILSON.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

The Rev. John Clulow's Report on Sunday-Schools.

(*Concluded from page* 240.)

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS AND WALES.

My engagements, since last Conference, have included eighty Circuits in the London, Bedford and Northampton, Kent, Oxford, Portsmouth, Bristol, Birmingham, Macclesfield, Liverpool, Leeds, Nottingham and Derby, Lincoln, Hull, York, Whitby and Darlington, and Newcastle Districts, in which I have visited the Day and Sunday schools, preached, and attended public meetings or conferences of officers and teachers in furtherance of our educational work.

Early in the autumn I paid a visit to the Channel Isles, where I had the pleasure of seeing our French and English Sunday-schools side by side, in vigorous operation, and met large representative assemblies of the teachers of all the schools, French as well as English, in Jersey and Guernsey. I personally examined two or three specimen schools of both kinds in each island. The English schools I saw were St. Helier's, Jersey; and Ebenezer, Guernsey. They are similar in plan; and but slightly different in practice. Both are held in school-rooms distinct from the chapels, but the lack of class-rooms in sufficient number prevents the arrangement of the schools in departments; and the infants are taught with other and older classes, with equal disadvantage to themselves and to others. Mimpriss's Tablets for the first, second, and third grades are used for the younger children, and the Conference Lessons for those who are more advanced. Though the proportion of elder scholars is below that of schools in the North of England, there are two interesting classes of young men in the Jersey school, and one of young women at Ebenezer, Guernsey, under well-qualified teachers, and the managers are alive to the importance of developing this division of their scholars. In Guernsey, one of the Ministers meets the teachers weekly to assist them in preparing the lessons before they are given, and the Superintendent Minister of the Jersey Circuit has two Bible-classes, including teachers and others, and meets the children in country places half-an-hour before the usual week-night service. Considerable attention has been given to school-organization in the English Circuits, and a most intelligent interest in everything that can increase the efficiency of our schools is manifested by all who are engaged in them. Circuit Sunday-School Unions have been recently established in each island; one of the effects of which has been the issue of a comprehensive set of rules, in harmony with our Connexional regulations: these have been, to a large extent, adopted in the schools, and are leading to greater uniformity of action, deeper sympathy, and more frequent intercourse between the teachers.

I was present at the French school, Grove-place, St Helier's, on Sunday morning. It is held in the most convenient school-room in the island; for, though it is beneath the spacious chapel, it is lofty, well-lighted, and ventilated, and supplied with every requisite. It has seven class-rooms, which are as useful for Society as for school purposes, and are invaluable for the latter. The infants in the best Sunday-schools in England are trained collectively, with the aid of a small gallery, letter-box, Scripture pictures, &c.; but here the order is reversed, the infants being taught in small classes in the separate rooms, and the upper division in the principal room. The "lessons" for the Scripture classes are prepared under the direction of the French Conference, and for the other classes those of Mr. Mimpriss are used. The order is excellent, and the instruction thorough. There is a unity of plan in the school-exercises, and the whole partakes of the character of a religious service, opened by appropriate worship, followed by the reading from the desk of a chapter in which the lesson occurs, continued by the lesson itself in each class, and concluded by a short address on the same subject. I heard one of these addresses by a gentleman who speaks French and English with equal facility, and was struck with the prompt replies of the children to his questions, and their unbroken interest from first to last. Our own Catechisms in the French language, and "Elements of Theology," published by the French Protestant Tract Society, are learnt by the children. I also visited the French school, Victoria-road, St. Peter's Port, Guernsey, and a village-school in the parish of St. Sampson. The latter contained a larger proportion of elder scholars than any school I saw; out of 175 scholars, fully one third were above fifteen years of age, and two classes were wholly made up of young men and women. This school has been a chief means of supplying the Society with members, and the present staff of teachers consists entirely of former scholars. There are fifty of these, who teach only one Sunday in three, and are

themselves taught the intervening Sabbaths. This system of employing elder scholars as teachers, though it effectually retains them in the school, may, however, lessen the teaching power, and it might be better to retain them in an adult section with teachers of higher attainments, than to introduce them prematurely to the responsibilities of the teacher's office. Were this method adopted, and the school furnished with buildings suitable for a complete classification in infant, juvenile, and adult departments, it would be a model Sunday-school. Its past success forms its present difficulty, and renders enlargement and adaptation indispensable to its progress.

About thirty years ago a Methodist Union of the French Sunday-schools in Jersey was formed, chiefly through the influence of Judge Neil, who long acted as its visiter, going to the schools in succession, and examining the children, either in classes or by schools, in our Catechisms and the Scriptures. A Book-Room was instituted, and translations of the Catechisms, a Biblical Manual, the "Life of Wesley" by Watson, Wesley on "Christian Perfection," Memoirs of John Nelson, Henry Longden, De Queteville, (the apostle of Jersey Methodism,) &c., were published for the use of the school-libraries. Prizes, too, were given to the scholars in the shape of books, which in the course of a quarter of a century amounted to the value of £3,000. In this way ten thousand volumes of sound Christian literature were put into circulation, and an authorised life of the founder of Methodism introduced into almost every Wesleyan family. This has, doubtless, been one of the most powerful agencies by which Methodism has attained a paramount influence over the population. The Union was continued till about seven years ago, when the French Conference became able to supply Methodist books in the French language, and the need for distinct action ceased.

There is one feature in which the English and French schools differ. The former meet twice, and the latter only once, in the day. It is difficult to account for the fact that the French schools are, with scarcely an exception, only morning or afternoon schools, but for the strong old Methodist attachment to the Church of England which still exists, and the attendance of children at both Church and Wesleyan schools. This is done on system, the hours of attendance being adjusted with reference to it. However fitting this custom may have been in former times, it cannot be necessary or convenient now, as it leads the children to grow up without a strong affection either for the Church of England or for our own, and vitiates the accuracy of Sunday-school returns, the same children being enumerated as belonging to schools of two different denominations.

There is also a peculiarity among the French schools; for, while those of Guernsey are met in winter as well as summer, those in the country parts of Jersey are intermitted for several months in the year; or, if continued, are not attended by more than a tithe of the teachers, and a quarter of the scholars, on the books. This is attributed to the weather, and the distance of children from the schools; but it is manifestly perilous to the vigour and efficiency of the schools themselves, and to the best interests of the children. To name these effects of the practice is surely sufficient to induce the teachers to devote themselves to their work, and perpetuate the schools all the year round.

The most immediate want of Methodism in the Channel Isles is Day-schools, in which both the English and French languages may be taught, as the complement of our Sunday-schools. In Jersey alone we have chapel-accommodation in the French Circuit for 5,000 people, and in the English Circuit for 2,000 more; but we have only one Day-school, and that seven miles away from the Circuit-town. We have 500 scholars in the English Sunday-schools, and 1,500 in the French; but we have only 130 scholars in the Day-school. The want is the greater because the Church Day-schools are made an engine of proselytism, and the Roman-Catholic Day-schools of perversion. A pupil-teacher, who was a scholar in our Sunday-school, was refused employment in the Church Day-school, except on condition of giving up her Methodist Sunday-school. This was felt to be a hard requirement, but she at length yielded. The Roman Catholics have Day-schools in which pure French is taught with English; and it is said that some Protestant children are sent to them, for the sake of this advantage. I inspected our Day-school at St. Owen's. It is in a high state of discipline and progress in both the French and English departments, having repeatedly obtained the highest approval of her Majesty's Inspector and the Inspector of the Estates of Jersey, and might well serve as a model for other schools. The subject received the careful consideration of a meeting of French and English friends during my visit; and I am happy to learn that a scheme is in contemplation that will be adequate to the requirements at St. Helier's.

I have also visited North Wales, and availed myself of the opportunity of holding a series of meetings, and of forming an

estimate of the Sunday-school system of the Principality by personal observation and inquiry. Welsh Sabbath-schools had their origin in the great religious movement in that country, which took place about the middle of the last century; and, as they derived their existence from it, they, in turn, gave support and permanence to it. From the first they have been essentially Church-schools, consisting of the different congregations, which meet on Sundays, not only for worship, but for the instruction of the young, and for a systematic study of religious truth. Perhaps in no country have these institutions yielded so large a per-centage of Church-members. Our own Sunday-schools, in the two Welsh-speaking Districts, contained 22,012 scholars, 8,238 of whom are members of Society, or thirty-seven per cent. of the whole. If the same proportion of such scholars were universal in our schools, we should report upwards of 200,000 members of the Church, or six times the present number, among our Sunday-scholars.

The school-work is performed under some disadvantages. Separate school-buildings, so essential to appropriate organization, are the exception to the rule in Wales. Our schools are generally assembled in the chapels, and sometimes occupy the gallery as well as fill the area. The use of chapels for school-houses has a tendency to weaken the sense of reverence for sacred places, though it may suggest attendance for worship at the same chapel to which the scholars go as a school. It also prevents the judicious division of the schools into departments. The want of school-rooms is felt by our school-superintendents, and some efforts have been made to supply it. At Denbigh there is one separate room, which, if not sufficient for the school, is found very useful in dealing with the infants. At Abergele there are three such rooms for the junior-classes; and it is hoped that a school-building, distinct from the chapel, will ultimately be secured. At Bagillt there are three, available for classes in the Sunday-school, and for the Society on the week-days. At Bangor the erection and presentation of a complete establishment —Chapel, Day-school, and Minister's-house—to the Connexion, by Mr. Evans, have made provision for the classification of St. Paul's Sunday-school on the most approved principle, in infant, juvenile, and upper-divisions. That school is classified on the English model; still, the Horeb-school, which is arranged in the old Welsh fashion, with men, women, and children together, is quite as popular as its young rival.

The absence of separate rooms, whether for schools or classes, necessitates the training of even the youngest children with other and older scholars. They begin with the simplest rudiments,—the alphabetic tablets, spelling, and First Lesson-Books being in use. Now, as at the first, with many the Sunday-school is the only school they ever attend; and they acquire the art of reading their mother-tongue through its instrumentality. When Charles of Bala began his benevolent work of Sabbath-school instruction there was scarcely one Welshman in ten who could read in any language; but now there is not one Welshman in a hundred, above ten years of age, who is not able to read at least in Welsh. An officer in one of the schools said to me, "This is our national college, Sir;" and expressed his regret that Englishmen generally do not appreciate the value of the lessons learnt in it in a literary view. Perhaps this circumstance leads the common people to regard the Sunday-school as simply an educational institute. Still, from whatever motive the children are sent, they come under a Christian influence in the school, which often results in conversion. I had evidence of the religious aim with which the better teachers convey the knowledge of reading. The Bible, too, soon takes the place of the Easy Lesson-Book, and thenceforth becomes "the one Book" of the school. Then the education of the memory is a speciality of the Welsh Sunday-school. The little ones are accustomed to commit to memory texts of Scripture, verses of hymns, answers to our Catechisms, and portions of good books; and these seeds of truth frequently take root, spring up, and yield, in due season, the fruits of good living. Repetition of Catechism, &c., forms a constant part of the school-exercises, and the amount of it is announced at the close of school. In the Abergele Sunday-school, 1,207 chapters, and 5,075 verses, with several chapters of Catechism, were repeated in this manner last year. The children are met on one or two evenings of the week, and questioned on the text of the previous Sabbath; and are addressed upon it, the service being interspersed with singing, recitation of Psalms, chapters, &c. These children's-meetings have made impressions on multitudes of the young that have never worn out in after-life, and form an important means of pastoral oversight of the young.

The most remarkable characteristic of the Welsh Sunday-schools is the attendance of adults as well as children and young people. This had its rise in the historical development of these schools in the Principality. The founders of them, when they gathered the young for Christian instruction, accepted all who came

and persons of all ages, and both sexes, flocked to them, and so it has grown into a habit for persons to attend the schools even to advanced age. We have a goodly sprinkling of old scholars in our Sunday-school at Carnarvon; and in the Calvinistic Methodist school I noticed seven venerable women in one class, conning over the Sacred Page, and tracing the lines in their well-thumbed Bibles, to spell out its glorious truths; at Bagillt the gallery of our chapel was occupied by young men and women, old men and matrons. The habit of adult attendance prevents the general loss of scholars on their approach to mature life, which is too much the case in England. I did, however, hear regret that in some schools difficulty was felt in keeping young men from eighteen to twenty-five. This was attributed to the want of more intelligent teachers, and regular inquiry into the causes of absence, and vigorous effort to bring back absentees. Indeed, in Wales, as elsewhere, the visitation of absentees is too much left to official visiters, and too little attended to by the teachers themselves, who are the natural visiters of their own scholars, and most likely to reclaim wanderers to their duty. A vigorous system of registration would facilitate this most needful work. In some Welsh Sunday-schools, no class-registers are kept, but the names are entered upon a common roll-book, and the numbers present are ascertained by the Secretaries going from class to class, and announced, with the texts repeated, before the dismissal of the school. In the Conway and Abergele schools, both class and general registers are used; but in others there are neither. In such schools the adoption of the excellent Registers published by our English Book-Room would stimulate officers and teachers to seek and save the lost, and bind more closely the bond which unites the teachers and the taught; while a frequent comparison of the attendance of teachers and scholars would keep the subject continually under notice.

The senior scholars are wholly engaged in the study of the Word of God; which is sometimes gone through chapter by chapter. Great care, I am told, is taken with the reading, the spelling, punctuation, and pronunciation of the scholars. At one time a whole chapter is discussed; but at another, a paragraph, or even a verse, will occupy the time. After a chapter has been read, consecutively, it is slowly gone through a second time, questions as to its meaning being addressed by the teacher to the reader, or as frequently put by some member of the class to the others. When the views of the class have been elicited, the teacher sums up the whole, and gives his own conclusions, with the reasons on which they are founded. Commentaries by Barnes, or Clarke, or Coke, or Scott and Henry are possessed by many of the scholars, who often sustain their opinions on the subject of inquiry by quotations from some of these authorities. About twenty minutes before the close of the school, the Superintendent reads a few verses of Scripture, and conducts a free examination of the whole. I heard this done at Carnarvon, when the resident Minister obligingly translated the answers given to me. They showed the accurate acquaintance of the pupils with the scope of the passage, one giving Dr. Clarke's note on "vain repetitions" in prayer, from memory. The circulation of the Scriptures and inquiry into their meaning have gone on concurrently in Wales; the need of Welsh Bibles for Sunday-schools having given rise to the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the first efforts of that noble institution having been put forth to supply Bibles for the Welsh schools. The union thus formed has been most usefully continued to the present day. "In Charles's time, to see a labouring man the possessor of a Bible, and able to read it, was a wonder; but now, to see a labouring man without a Bible, and unable to read it, is a greater wonder." Would that this were the case throughout the United Kingdom.

The teachers of the schools are earnest and godly, upwards of ninety per cent. being members of Society; which may account for so many scholars being also Church-members. The officers are changed, or re-elected, annually, and the teachers quarterly, or even monthly; and though some are rarely removed, and do not leave their classes for a series of years, others, and especially in the infant-classes, are frequently changed. This is often a necessity, from the tediousness of teaching the alphabet or spelling-book in trying circumstances, and many teachers will not endure it longer than a month. They are recruited from the ranks of the elder scholars, who, nevertheless, prefer remaining to learn, to teaching the little ones. It is, too, much to be wished that this class of scholars could be drafted from the rest, and taught collectively with object-lessons. Were this done, one teacher would keep in order as many as eight or ten can do on the present plan, instruction would be more pleasantly communicated, and teachers of experience would elect to stay with the infants for years from love of the work. The increase of Day-schools under trained teachers is rapidly going on in Wales, and must ultimately render elementary instruction in Sunday-schools unnecessary, leaving

these schools to pursue their high object, the Christian education of the young.

Dogmatic teaching is a distinguishing part of Welsh Sunday-school work. In addition to our own Catechisms, several others on Scripture doctrines, evidences, or history, by eminent Welsh Ministers, are in common use in the schools, while much of the instruction given assumes a catechetical form. More than this, the schools of a Circuit, or part of a Circuit, to the number of three or four, are occasionally assembled to recite Catechism, or to be orally examined on some Biblical subject which is previously announced; when much emulation is shown in giving quick and satisfactory answers to the questions of ministerial catechists. All this has a tendency to whet their appetite for theological knowledge, and to familiarise their minds with doctrinal and saving truths.

Our Welsh brethren have anticipated us in the preparation and publication of a duly authorised set of Rules for the regulation of Welsh Sunday-Schools. They are constitutional in principle, at the same time that they are liberal in spirit and substance; providing for a complete organization of the schools, and furnishing forms of statistical reports for the union of the schools of a Circuit. They have received the sanction of the North and South Wales District Meetings and been generally adopted; and, where not taken in their entirety, they serve as a model for school-authorities, and promote uniformity of practice in everything essential to efficiency.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

The Three Graces.

FAITH.

Bloom brightly, little bud;
All humble as thou art,
God sendeth the still dew
To nestle in thy heart:
And all He sends is *best* for thee,
E'en though it be adversity.

HOPE.

Soar calmly, my sweet bird;
Ne'er flutter, faint, nor fail,
Though many a mocking word
Thine upward flight assail:
Ere long the starry heavens will ope,
And crown with joy my patient Hope.

CHARITY.

Flow gently, little stream,
Beneath a burning sky;
Spread gladness like a gleam
Of mercy from God's eye:
Though parch'd the land, one touch from thee
May quench that thirst, O Charity!

Praying and Giving.

One of our friends keeps a family Missionary-box, and a little daughter of six summers was very desirous of putting in her pennies also with the rest. Some time after, she was saying her evening-prayer at her father's knee, when, to his surprise, she hesitated a moment, and then added, "Lord, bless my two pennies, for Jesu's sake. Amen."

Waiting until she was in bed, he asked his wife, "What made Gracie say that?" and the reply was, "She has prayed thus every night since giving her pennies to the Missionary-box."

May we not believe that the little one's pennies will surely be blessed; and learn from a child the lesson, ever to send a prayer with our almsgiving?

Wilful Children.

Be sure to give no commands of which you cannot enforce obedience. The powers of resistance possessed by some little children are truly extraordinary: be careful not to arouse them. A spirit of antagonism is most dangerous, and, once awakened, may never again become dormant through life. Once let a child conquer you, and it will never forget the lesson. Let your commands, then, be few; and insist on obedience to them.

"I'm God's Child."

A little boy, two years and a-half old, was one day asked, "Whose child are you?" "I'm God's child," said he.

I once knew of a little girl, not quite so old, who, if any one asked her who she was, would reply, "I'm Papa's 'ittle daughter; Mamma's 'ittle daughter, too; Dod's 'ittle dirl; and Desus' 'ittle lamb."

Dear little ones, can you say, "I'm God's child?" "I'm Jesus's little lamb?" I hope you can, and that you may all be gathered into His fold when He comes.

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

NOVEMBER 1.—Afternoon Lesson.

ORDINANCES AND PROMISES.—Exodus xxiii. 10—33.

For repetition, verses 20—22.

Summary. — The Israelites are commanded to observe the year of rest, the day of rest, and the three great feasts; and have the promise of preservation and guidance, health and plenty, victory and dominion.

I. Ordinances.—(1.) *The rest-year*, —V. 10, 11. These verses give directions respecting the year of rest, which, however, was not formally instituted till some time afterwards. See Lev. xxv. 3—7. They were to sow and reap for six years; and during the seventh year the land was to lie fallow. The promise connected with this command was truly marvellous. The sixth year, by God's blessing, would produce food enough for three years! See Lev. xxv. 20—22.

(2.) *The rest-day.*—V. 12, 13. Here are directions respecting the day of rest, which had been instituted previously. See ch. xx. 9—11. Special prominence is given to the notion of rest and refreshment, as intended to be afforded by the Sabbath; and the subject is pressed in favour of beasts of burden, slaves, and foreigners. V. 13 shows the spirit in which these two commands should be observed.

(3.) *The three feasts.* — V. 14 — 19. They were to keep, each year, three great national festivals; on which occasions they were to make pilgrimages to the sanctuary of Jehovah. Amidst the toils, and burdens, and sorrows of life, these times of festal rejoicing would be in themselves a blessing; but they were especially valuable, because accompanied by the privilege of appearing before the Lord their God. The *feast of unleavened bread*, or the Passover, was instituted previously; and all that is added here is, that they were not to come before the Lord *empty;* i. e., empty-handed, but with sacrificial gifts. This command related to all the feasts. The other two festivals are mentioned here for the first time. At the *feast of harvest*, or Pentecost, the firstfruits of their field-labour were to be presented to the Lord; that is, as subsequently explained, the first loaves made from the new wheat. See Lev. xxiii. 17—21. The *feast of ingathering*, or of tabernacles, was to be held at the *end of the* civil *year*, which began with the preparation of the ground for sowing, and ended when all the produce of the fields and gardens was gathered in. It was afterwards fixed for the "fifteenth day of the seventh month." See Num. xxix. 12. Each of these feasts commemorated some important fact in the history of Israel. The Passover celebrated the exodus from Egypt. Pentecost, which means "the fiftieth," was to keep in mind the giving of the law on the fiftieth day after the Passover. It is called the "feast of weeks" because there were seven clear weeks between the exodus and the giving of the law. The feast of tabernacles commemorated the dwelling of the Israelites in tents during their stay in the wilderness. Verses 17—19 lay down rules for the proper observance of these feasts. Only *males*, meaning such as were included in the census, (Num. i. 3,) were commanded to make these pilgrimages; though women and children were not excluded. See 1 Sam. i. 3 — 7; Luke ii. 41 — 43. *My sacrifice*,— i. e., the Passover, which typified the Lamb of God. Upon *leavened bread*,—i. e., "until all leaven is removed from your houses." The *seething*, or boiling, *a kid in his mother's milk*, is forbidden as unnatural and improper. "Even *human* nature shudders at the thought of causing

the mother to lend her milk to seethe the flesh of her young one!"—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

II. PROMISES.—(1.) *Preservation and guidance.*—V. 20—23. *An Angel.*—No created angel can be meant, for Jehovah's name was in Him; i. e., Jehovah revealed Himself in Him. He was, therefore, the great Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwelt "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Being Himself God, He demanded unconditional obedience, and would refuse *pardon* to the obstinate and incorrigible.

(2.) *Health and plenty.*—V. 24—26. *Bread* and *water* are mentioned as being the provisions indispensable for the maintenance of life. Compare Isai. iii. 1; xxxiii. 16. Besides food, health, prosperity, and long life are promised to the obedient.

(3.) *Victory and dominion.*—V. 27—33. *My fear.*—Compare ch. xv. 14—16; Deut. ii. 25; Josh. ii. 11. *Hornets.*—These are a very large species of wasp, much dreaded by both man and beast. Compare Josh. xxiv. 12. *Become desolate,*—for want of men to cultivate it. *Multiply.*—Compare 2 Kings xvii. 25, 26. *The sea of the Philistines,*—the Mediterranean. *The desert,*—of Arabia. *The river,*—Euphrates.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *The very beasts should have their Sabbaths.*—God takes care for oxen.

2. *God requires a portion of our property.*—It is at once a privilege and a duty to support His cause. We can only offer Him what He has given.

3. *It is very wicked to disobey Christ.*—He may refuse His forgiveness. He commands you to believe; and "he that believeth not shall be damned."

4. *Jesus is with us.*—As He was with Israel, so He is with His people. Hear and obey Him. Dare not to provoke Him; and He "will be an enemy unto your enemies, and an adversary unto your adversaries."

5. *His blessing maketh rich.*—However coarse and scanty may be your provision, if He bless it, it will be both sweet and sufficient.

6. *He proportions our happiness to our holiness.*—Our true prosperity depends upon our faithfulness. When our "righteousness" is as the "waves," our "peace" is as a "river." See Isai. xlviii. 18.

QUESTIONS.—What is said of the year of rest? of the day of rest? What was the first of the three feasts? Why was it called the Passover? Which was the second feast? Why is it called Pentecost? What did it commemorate? when was it held? Why was the feast of tabernacles appointed? why was it so called? when was it kept? Who is meant by the Angel that was promised? Why is it so wicked to disobey Him? What blessings are promised? to whom?

Illustration.—SEETHING A KID.

See v. 19. "While on the subject of cooking, take another favourite dish of the Arabs. They select a young kid, fat and tender, dress it carefully, and then stew it in milk, generally sour, mixed with onions and hot spices, such as they relish. They call it *Lebn immâ*—'kid in his mother's milk.' The Jews, however, will not eat it."—*Land and Book.*

NOVEMBER 8.—MORNING LESSON.

EVIL AND GOOD.—Psalm xxxvii. 16—40.

SUMMARY.—The righteous and the wicked are contrasted in life and death. It is well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. This is confirmed by the Psalmist's observation and experience.

I. LITTLE AND MUCH.—V. 16. David places the small possession of one righteous man in opposition to the collected goods of all his ungodly neighbours. His *little is better than* their much, because it has God's blessing in it. V. 17. The *arms* mean the power to do evil. He whose arms are *broken*, can no more either help himself, or injure others. V. 18. This *knowing* of the Lord includes His loving care. He preserves the lives of His saints, and will not suffer them to want. V. 20. *The wicked*, though prosperous for a season, shall certainly pass away like *smoke*. V. 21, 22. While the wicked, overtaken by God's judgments, are unable even to *pay* what they have *borrowed*, *the righteous* shall have means to show generosity. See Deut. xv. 6.

II. An Old Man's Testimony.—V. 23, 24. If we submit to God's guidance in everything, He is sure to *delight in* our *way*, i.e., all our concerns and undertakings; so that we must prosper. Even if we *fall* into difficulties, He will help us out of them. V. 25, 26. What the Psalmist is saying of God's goodness to His people, was confirmed by his own observation and experience. He admits before that they may fall into temporary trouble, and even *he* was once driven to *beg bread* of the churlish Nabal; but he had never known either the *righteous*, or their *seed*, to be left in continued destitution.

III. Safe and Unsafe.—V. 30—36. Because *the law of his God is in his heart*, all the words and actions of a good man are in agreement with it. Notwithstanding the malignant opposition of the wicked, he advances steadily and surely in the good path. He may sometimes be discouraged; but his enemies shall be suddenly and mysteriously *cut off*, and then all will be plain.

IV. The Two Endings.—V. 37—40. The *perfect man* is the man who is described above. *Mark* him! His sins are pardoned, and his soul is sanctified. He bears God's image, and God not only cares for him through life, but gives him a peaceful death. He *trusts* alone in God; for he knows that only He, through the merits of His Son, can *save* him. Contrast with this the end of *the transgressors*, when God *cuts* them *off*. They have no God to trust in, and no salvation to hope for.

Reflections.—1. *Though the righteous have but little, they are blessed.*—God gives that little, and with it His special blessing.

2. *They who have much, may yet be very unhappy.*—They often obtain that "much" by unholy means, and God's blessing is withheld from it.

3. *The lives of God's people are in His keeping.*—Their times are in His hands; and they can only die when He pleases.

4. *God's people have His law within them.*—God is not our God if His law is not in our hearts, guiding and governing our lives.

5. *The righteous have peace at the last.*—Their lives may have been more or less cloudy and stormy; but they die in peace, and then "enter into peace,"—pure, perfect, everlasting peace.

6. *Sinners never end well.*—God cuts them off at once from life, and hope, and happiness.

Questions.—How may a little be better than much? What is meant by "the arms of the wicked?" by God's knowing "the days of the upright?" What does David say of himself? What had he observed? By what are the righteous governed? How do the righteous and the wicked differ at last?

Illustrations.—I. MUCH AND LITTLE.

See v. 16. "I have heard of a good man whose soul prospered alike in temporal prosperity and adversity. He had an intimate friend who used to make free with him, and, observing his prosperity, he one day thus addressed him, 'Do not you find the smiles of the world, my friend, to be a snare unto you?' He paused, and said, 'I am not conscious that I do; for, though I enjoy much of this world, yet I think I enjoy God in all things.' By and by Providence turned another way: he lost all his property; he sunk into indigence; he had scarcely a competency to support him. His old friend thus addressed him, 'Well, my friend, how is it with you now? do not you find your heart dejected in these circumstances?' 'I am not conscious,' said he, 'that I do; as before I enjoyed God in all things, now I enjoy all things in God. I find God to supply all my wants, and a little, with His blessing, is enough.'"—*Rev. A. Fuller.*

II. THE BAY-TREE.

See v. 35. "The bay-tree (*Laurus nobilis*) was the Daphne of the Greeks, and flourishes chiefly in southern Europe. Linnæus gave to this species of laurel the specific name *nobilis*, because of its consecration to priests, poets, and heroes. This plant is more often a shrub than a tree, as it is so prolific in suckers and low shoots; but in Italy, as well as in Syria, it is often from twenty to thirty feet in height, and sometimes is sixty feet high; its dark olive-green leaves rendering it a picturesque object. . . . . It was, in all probability, on account of the never-changing greenness of the bay-tree, as well as for the pleasant and spicy fragrance of its leaves, that the Psalmist selected this tree as an emblem of prosperity."—*Plants and Trees of Scripture.*

NOVEMBER 8.—Afternoon Lesson.

STRANGE THINGS SEEN.—Luke v. 12—39.

For repetition, verses 12—15.

SUMMARY.—Our Lord heals a leper and a paralytic, and the people are amazed. He calls Levi, the publican, to follow Him, feasts with sinners, and discourses concerning fasting.

I. THE LEPER.—V. 12—15. *A certain city*,—in Galilee, Mark i. 39, 40. *Full of leprosy.*—It was one of the worst of cases. Of this St. Luke, who was a physician, was well able to judge. *If Thou wilt*, &c.—This is a strong expression of confidence in Christ's power to heal. The man believed in His willingness also, or he would not have appealed to Him. *Touched him.*—No one else dared to do this, for fear of defilement; but Jesus cleansed him whom He touched, and remained pure Himself. *Charged him to tell no man*,—i. e., till he had been to the priest. *As Moses commanded.*—See Lev. xiv. 4, 10, 21, 22.

II. THE PARALYTIC.—V. 16—26. This miracle was wrought at Capernaum, Mark ii. 1. The man was disabled by paralysis, and had, doubtless, begged his friends to convey him to Jesus. He was so utterly helpless, that they could remove him only by carrying him on his bed. Finding the house full, and the entry crowded, they lifted him to the top of the house,—a low, one-storied building,—removed the tiling, and let him down inside by means of the bed-clothes. The words of Jesus, on seeing him, referred, doubtless, to those who were *sitting by*, v. 17. He would draw their attention to the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. Accordingly, He first declared the man forgiven, and then proved that He had the power to pardon by healing him. *Strange things*,—literally, "things beyond our expectation."

III. LEVI CALLED.—V. 27—32. This *Levi* was the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew. See Matt. ix. 9. He was a *publican*, or tax-collector; and *sat* at the excise-office. The publicans, as a class, were unprincipled and rapacious; and Matthew, like the rest of them, was considered a bad man. We have no reason to form the same opinion of him. He instantly obeyed the call of Jesus, at the cost of a lucrative situation. He then made a *great feast*, inviting to it many of his fellow-publicans, and Jesus, his new Master. He would have them also to become His disciples. The way to save sinners is not to despise them, to call them hard names, or to keep aloof from them; but to visit them, and kindly warn them, and to show a heartfelt interest in them. If Jesus came to save them, who are we, that we should despise them?

IV. ON FASTING.—V. 33—35. John the Baptist seems to have required his followers to copy his severe and abstemious habits. The Pharisees, too, were frequently fasting; but this was to gain admiration for their singular self-denial. John's disciples were taught the duty of public prayer. The Pharisees, also, "made long prayers;" but they did this "for a pretence," to parade their piety, and to win credit for a sanctity which was not theirs. Our Lord urged His disciples to pray, especially in private, Matt. vi. 5, 6. He commended fasting also; but He taught that, to be acceptable, it must be secret, Matt. vi. 17, 18. He did not require His disciples to fast. While He was with them, fasting would have been as unseemly as weeping at a wedding. But He would shortly be violently taken from them. His enemies would be their enemies. The world would be against them. They would have fasting enough then!

V. OLD AND NEW.—V. 36—39. A piece of *new cloth*, being full and strong, cannot well be sewed to an *old garment*, worn thin, and half-rotten; and if it could be, its fresh dye would not "match" with what is old and faded. *Old* leathern *bottles*, such as our Lord alludes to, would *burst* from their seams, were *new wine* put into them, and left to ferment. "New wine"—i.e., wine fresh from the grapes—is neither so pleasant nor so wholesome as wine which has been mellowed by long keeping. To enforce the austerities of the Baptist, or of the Pharisees, upon Christ's disciples, would be like attaching new

cloth to an old garment; or like putting new wine into old bottles; or like administering new wine to one who has just refreshed himself with "old."

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Jesus forgives sins.*—He would pardon all. Has He pardoned you? Have you asked Him?

2. *Christians should bring others to Christ.*—He was pleased with the faith of the sick man's friends, (Mark ii. 5,) and He is pleased with what His people do to bring sinners to Himself. He is the Friend of sinners, and all who love Him should be like Him.

3. *When Christ says, "Follow Me," follow Him.*—Matthew did; why do not you?

4. *Despise no one.*—The vilest person alive was bought by the blood of Jesus.

5. *All who feel themselves sinners may be saved.*—No sickness, no physician; no sin, no Saviour.

QUESTIONS.—How did the leper act when he saw Jesus? How was he healed? What was he not to do? What was he to do? What did Jesus then do? Who was brought to him? how? How did they get him to Jesus? What did Jesus say to him? What did the Pharisees say to this? How did Jesus answer them? Who was Levi? Where was he found? For whom did he make a feast? Who murmured? why? How were they answered? What was said about fasting?

Illustrations.—I. STAIRS.

See v. 19. "The staircases are sometimes placed in the porch, sometimes at the entrance into the court. . . . . We may go up or come down the staircase without entering into any of the offices or apartments; and, consequently, without interfering with the business of the house."—*Shaw's "Barbary."*

II. BEDS, OR COUCHES.

See v. 24. "The Eastern beds consist merely of two thick cotton quilts, one of which, folded double, serves as a mattress, the other as a covering. Such was the bed of David, which could easily be carried, with himself in it, to the presence of Saul; (1 Sam. xix. 15;) and that on which the paralytic was let down seems to have been of the same kind. It was, therefore, no difficult task which our Lord enjoined upon the latter, to take up his bed, and go into his house."—*Paxton.*

NOVEMBER 15.—MORNING LESSON.

MOSES ON THE MOUNT.—Exodus xxiv.

For repetition, verses 9—11.

SUMMARY.—Moses repeats God's words to the people, who promise obedience; and the covenant is solemnly ratified. God appears to Moses and the elders at the covenant-meal; and Moses ascends the mountain, where he sees God's glory, and remains forty days.

I. "THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT."—V. 1—4. *Come up,*—i. e., after the ratification of the covenant, as described below. Moses and Aaron were already on the mount. See ch. xix. 24. *Shall not come nigh,*—i.e., shall not go far up the mountain. *All the words of the* LORD,—i. e., the commands and promises of the previous chapters, in which God proposed to enter into covenant-relations with them. *All the words,* &c.—By this unanimous resolve they signified their acceptance of the terms of the covenant. *Wrote all the words,*—thus forming what is called "the book of the covenant," v. 7.

II. "THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT."—V. 4—8. *Builded an altar,*—as previously commanded, ch. xx. 24, 25. *Young men,*—chosen for their strength and ability for the work. *Which offered burnt-offerings,*—as assistants to Moses, who acted as priest. Their work was to kill, flay, and cut up the oxen. *Put it in basons,*—to be sprinkled on the people. *Sprinkled on the altar,*—as a sign that God accepted the atoning sacrifice. *Sprinkled it on the people,*—as a sign that they were reconciled to God. This, however, was not done till they had again heard the conditions of the covenant, and repeated their promise to *be obedient.* This

covenant was to introduce a better, (Heb. viii. 8—12,) and these sacrifices typified another, Heb. x. 4—14.

III. The Covenant-Meal.—V. 9—11. *Then went up Moses*, &c.,—from "under the hill," v. 4. *Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu*,—who were soon to be appointed priests. *Seventy of the elders*,—as representatives of the people. *They saw the God of Israel*,—i. e., a vision of God in some form of manifestation which made Him discernible to the human eye. *A paved work of a sapphire stone*,—i. e., what resembled some beautiful piece of mosaic. *As it were the body of heaven*, &c.,—or, "Like the sky itself for *clearness*." *He laid not His hand*.—They saw Him, and yet lived. Compare Acts xii. 1, 2. *And did eat and drink*,—i. e., what remained of the "peace-offerings."

IV. Moses with God.—V. 12—18. *Tables of stone*.—The ten commandments, written by God Himself, because they were never to be repealed. See ch. xxxi. 18; xxxii. 15, 16. *His minister*,—or, "servant." *If any man have any matters to do*,—i. e., any matters of dispute to be settled. *Forty days and forty nights*,—without eating or drinking. See Deut. ix. 9. Compare 1 Kings xix. 8; Matt. iv. 2.

Reflections.—1. *We should hear God's Word in an obedient spirit*.—He promises blessings, and enjoins duties; and, while we accept the former, we are expected to perform the latter. The Israelites promised obedience, and we are required to come to a similar decision.

2. *To God's Word we should frequently refer*.—Why did Moses write down the words of God? Why have the Gospels and Epistles been formed into a Book? Because it is not enough to hear God's Word once. We must have it by us, and constantly increase our knowledge by referring to it.

3. *Moses was a type of Christ*.—As the mediator of the old covenant, he alone was permitted to draw nigh to God. Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant, and none can come to the Father but by Him.

4. *God should be heard with fear*.—The seventy elders saw God, and yet lived, but their "carcases fell in the wilderness:" Balaam uttered extraordinary prophecies, but he loved the wages of unrighteousness. We may know much of Christ, and yet perish in our sins.

5. *God is terrible only to His enemies*.—To His own people He is a God of peace.

Questions.—What words did Moses tell the people? What resolution did they make? Why did Moses write the words? Where did he erect an altar? What did he do with the blood of the sacrifices? Why did he sprinkle the altar? why the people? To whom did God appear? Why was Moses called up into the Mount?

Illustration.—"blood of the covenant."

See v. 6, 8. "We have here not only a ratification of the treaty, but also a consecration of the people by the sprinkling of half the blood upon them. For the blood of the same animal, being partly placed on the altar, and partly on the people, signified the union of the people with God, His acceptance of their promise of obedience, and their participation in His grace and mercy. Allusion is made to this ceremony in the Epistle to the Hebrews, with a view to show the fulfilment of the typical shedding of blood in the Saviour's death. Heb. ix. 19, 20."—*Scripture Manners and Customs*.

NOVEMBER 15.—Afternoon Lesson.

Apostles chosen and taught.—Luke vi. 12—38.

Summary.—Our Lord passes a night in prayer, chooses the twelve Apostles, heals many, and preaches to His disciples.

I. A Night in Prayer.—V. 12. *In those days*,—i. e., about the time when the things recorded above transpired. *He went out*,—from Capernaum. *Into a mountain*.—Compare Matt. xiv. 23. *Continued all night in prayer*.—This was, doubtless, in preparation for the momentous work of the morrow,—the choosing of the twelve Apostles.

II. The Chosen Twelve.—V. 13—16. *Called unto Him His disciples*.—Mark says He "calleth unto Him whom He would," Mark iii. 13. He summoned to Him a certain larger number,

out of which He selected *twelve*. *Whom also He named Apostles*,—i. e., He did this now for the first time. *Whom He also named Peter*. — See John i. 42. *Zelotes*,—the Zelot, or the zealous. *Judas the brother of James*,—the son of Alphæus. This Judas was the author of what is called the Epistle of St. Jude.

III. The Great Healer.—V. 17—19. The disciples came to Jesus before He left the mountain, where He had been praying. Then, having chosen the twelve, He descended with them to the level country, where multitudes from all quarters met Him, bringing their sick with them. How many were healed on this, and similar occasions, is not said; but they were so very numerous, that, had all been narrated, the record would have been too large to read. See John xx. 30, 31; xxi. 25.

IV. "Blessed are Ye!"—V. 20—23. *Ye poor*.—The disciples were poor; but our Lord does not refer mainly, if at all, to this world's poverty. The word is to be understood in a spiritual sense. See Matt. v. 3. Only the "meek and lowly in heart" can enjoy true happiness here and hereafter. *That hunger*.—Here, again, the sense is spiritual. See Matt. v 6. Our desires for more light and goodness should resemble the feeling of hunger in their intensity. *That weep*.—They who were entitled to this benediction wept for their sins, for the sins of others, and for the low state of religion in general; but many gay and giddy laughers had more reason to weep than they; and one day all their tears would be for ever wiped away. *Shall separate you*.—This refers not only to Jewish excommunication, but to all kinds of expulsion from society. *Cast out your name as evil*.—See 1 Peter iv. 14—16. *In that day*,—i. e., in the very day in which they were thus injured. The *prophets*, now in heaven, were similarly treated.

V. "Woe unto You!"—V. 24—26. *You that are rich*.—God gives riches, 1 Chron. xxix. 12; so that it is not a sin to be rich. The words apply only to those among the wealthy who forget God. Their riches can give them no *consolation* after death. *That are full*,—i. e., satisfied without religion. Hereafter they will for ever *hunger* in vain for happiness. They may *laugh now*, but then they will *mourn and weep*.—See Matt. xxiv. 51. *When all men shall speak well of you*. — This appears to have been spoken to the disciples, to deter them from all unworthy endeavours to conciliate the good-will of sinners. They could not gain the "good word" of "all men" without great unfaithfulness to their Master.

VI. Love for Hate. — V. 27—38. The followers of Jesus should exhibit a higher kind and degree of virtue than ever was exemplified among men. They should return, for hatred, love; for curses, blessing; for malice, prayer; for evil, good. They should be benevolent, without any selfish aim; and, when they suffer wrong, they should not cherish a vindictive spirit. They should deal with others as they may reasonably desire to be dealt with in like circumstances. They should imitate the goodness of God. They should judge no one rashly, or uncharitably. They should ever be generous to the needy; and by so doing they will be gainers.

Reflections. — 1. *Important undertakings should be prepared for by prayer*. —Before choosing the twelve Apostles, our Lord spent a whole night in prayer. When Nehemiah desired the consent and help of Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, he first prayed that God would dispose the king to regard his request with favour, Neh. i. 11. The surest and the shortest way to true success in anything, is to commit it to God in prayer. See Prov. xvi. 3.

2. "*Who knows what is good for man in this life?*"—The general opinion is, that the rich, and great, and honourable are happy; but Jesus tells us that the poor, and the hungry, and the sorrowful, and the hated, are "blessed."

3. *Holy dispositions are the best proofs of our being God's children*.—Have you these dispositions? If you are poor in spirit, and hunger for righteousness, and weep for sin, and are hated by those who do not wish to be good, "your reward is great in heaven."

4. *Make your choice*.—To be poor on earth, and a king in heaven; or to be proud on earth, and poor in hell: to be hungry here, and filled hereafter; or here to be filled, and hereafter to hunger: to weep now, and be happy in eternity; or to laugh now, and weep for ever.

Questions.—Where did Jesus pray? Whom did He choose? what for? What were their names? Why did the multitude touch Jesus? Who are the "poor?" How are they blessed? Who are the hungry? the sorrowful? How are they blessed? Who are the "rich?" the "full?" the favourites of men? What are their woes?

Illustration.—SMITING ON THE CHEEK.

See v. 29. "It is not so much the pain which is be taken into account, as the shame of a scornful insult: hence among all people, and in all times, smiting upon the cheek has been in proverbial use in such a sense as this.—See Job xvi. 10; Isai. l. 6; Lam. iii. 30; 2 Cor. xi. 20, 21..... *Offer him the other also,*—that is, in thy heart, and in the disposition of thy mind; calmly and patiently wait if he may strike thee another blow, and be ready to receive that also: so far let thy spirit be from opposing, or declining, or avoiding it! This is all that our Lord intends to say by this emphatic expression, the figurative, proverbial letter of which must be understood in its spirit; for the actual turning of the other cheek might be no other than a challenge to continued sin, consequently itself sinful, and opposed to the love of our neighbour. There might even be a proud despite in it, or a mere hypocritical affectation. Christ interprets His own word by His own act in John xviii. 22, 23, when He gives to the rude officer a gracious word of gentle admonition in return for his blow, which, according to Isai. l. 6, the Lord's Spirit would, however, have suffered Him to repeat."—*Stier.*

NOVEMBER 22.—Morning Lesson.

HEARERS AND DOERS.—Luke vi. 39—49.

For repetition, verses 43—45.

Summary.—Our Lord concludes His sermon on "the plain" (v. 17) with sundry admonitions.

I. Blind Leaders.—V. 39, 40. A person teaching what he does not understand, resembles one blind man attempting to guide another. Such was the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees; and as the *masters*, so were the *disciples*. Christ, however, was a sure Teacher; and *every one that is perfect*,—i.e., fully instructed,—becomes like Him.

II. Motes and Beams.—V. 41, 42. A *mote* is a very small splinter of wood, and it represents here a trivial fault in our neighbour. A *beam* is a solid block of timber, and it denotes a serious fault in ourselves. To extract the splinter requires a perfect vision; and to suppose that the eye with a beam in it is equal to the task, is absurd.

III. Good Fruit and Bad Fruit.—V. 43—45. This metaphor of the fruit-trees shows that a bad man cannot be a good Christian; nor a good Christian a bad man.

IV. Rock and Sand.—V. 46—49. To be a Christian is to obey Christ; and not merely to call Him "Lord," or to profess His religion. Having thus shown in what true wisdom lies, our Lord now shows how it will be tested. There are storms coming—the trials of persecution, affliction, death, and the judgment-day. He compares the two classes of His hearers to two men building themselves a *house:* the one upon the *sand*, where the flood will undermine it, or the tempest sweep it away; the other upon a *rock*, which bids defiance to wind and rain.

Reflections.—1. *The blind need guiding.*—All are by nature spiritually blind. Without guidance no one can find his way to God. Blind guides in religion can only draw others after them into that ruin which reaches to hell. Christ is an infallible Guide, and He is willing to guide you. See Isai. xlii. 16.

2. *The greatest fault-finders have commonly the most faults.*

3. *A full heart and a closed mouth do not suit each other.*—The Christian cannot help speaking of Jesus, Acts iv. 19, 20. His love to Christ constrains him to call Him "Lord, Lord!"

4. *Profession is not enough alone.*—Some neither say "Lord, Lord," nor do His will; others do not His will, though they say "Lord, Lord;" some endeavour to do His will, without saying, "Lord, Lord;" the true Christian unites the saying and the doing. He

calls Him "Lord, Lord," and also does His will.

5. *See to your foundation.*—You are now building for eternity, either on the rock, or on the sand. Which is it?

QUESTIONS.—"Can the blind lead the blind?" why not? Who are meant by the blind? Why do we need guidance? How may we obtain it? What is meant by "the mote?" "the beam?" "a good tree?" "a corrupt tree?" What is meant by calling Christ "Lord, Lord?" Who is the man like that hears and obeys Christ? Who is he that will not obey Him like?

Illustration.—RAINS.

See v. 49. "At Aleppo the violent rains often wash down stone walls; and Dr. Russel mentions a remarkable instance of a hamlet and a fig-garden, in the Castravan mountains, being suddenly removed, by the swelling waters, to a great distance. It was to an event of this kind, which is by no means uncommon in those regions, that our Lord refers."—*Paxton.*

NOVEMBER 22.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE GOLDEN CALF.—Exodus xxxii.

SUMMARY.—The covenant is broken, in the absence of Moses, and, on his return from the mountain, he seeks a renewal of it.

I. THE COVENANT BROKEN.—V. 1—6. *Delayed to come down.*—Moses had waited forty years for them, Acts vii. 25, 30; but they could not wait forty days for him, ch. xxiv. 18. *Make us gods.*—If a true God, one is enough; if not, many are worthless. *Which shall go before us.*—A *made* god cannot "go" at all, Jer. x. 5. *The golden earrings.*—Aaron, probably, hoped that the women would not part with these jewels; but he was mistaken. *To-morrow is a feast to the Lord.*—Aaron aimed at a compromise. He does the people's bidding to-day, in the hope that they will meet his wishes to-morrow. *Rose up to play.*—There was "dancing," v. 19; and "the people were naked," v. 25.

II. THE MEDIATOR.—V. 7—14. *Thy people,—Mine* no longer. *Let Me alone,*—do not intercede in their behalf. *I will make of thee a great nation.*—This was a great test for Moses. He was himself to decide whether or not he would give up his people as the price of his own exaltation. *Moses besought the Lord.*—His patriotism and piety stood the test. He pleads God's wonderful acts towards Israel, His honour in the sight of the Egyptians, and the promises He had made to the patriarchs; and prays that, for His own sake, He would show mercy instead of justice.

III. THE LOST LEADER.—V. 15—24. *The two tables,*—thin slabs of stone. See ch. xxiv. 12. *Cast the tables,* &c.—This was not done in sinful anger, but as a figurative act, to show the people that God's covenant with them was broken through their idolatry. *Made the children of Israel drink of it.*—He compelled them to swallow their own god, as if to humble and shame them; but he probably designed by this to set forth both the sin and its consequences. The sin was poured, as it were, into their bowels with the water, as a sign that they would have to bear it and suffer for it. *There came out this calf.*—This was a falsehood, and the whole of Aaron's vindication of his conduct was so mean and contemptible that Moses deigned to give no reply.

IV. THE CHALLENGE.—V. 25—29. *Who is on the Lord's side?*—Who has had no share in this iniquity? or, who will now repent, and return to duty? *All the sons of Levi,*—all the men of his own tribe. *About three thousand men,*—ringleaders, doubtless, in the idolatrous revolt. *Consecrate yourselves,* &c.—They would, no doubt, shrink from this service, but in this way they were to show the sincerity of their repentance.

V. RENEWED INTERCESSION.—V. 30—35. *Peradventure.*—God had not yet told Moses what He would do in the matter. *Thy book which thou hast written.*—The book which God has written is the Book of Life, or of the living. See Ps. lxix. 28. Moses was ready to stake his own life for the deliverance of the nation. *Whosoever hath sinned,* &c.—This afterwards included Moses himself. See Num. xxvii. 12—14. *Mine angel,*—not Myself. This was afterwards revoked, ch. xxxiii. 12

—17. *In the day*, &c.—That is, if they continued to do evil, this sin should, at last, be punished with the rest. See Num. xiv. 22, 23.

Reflections.—1. *Learn to wait.*—Saul got into trouble and sin because he could not wait for Samuel, 1 Sam. xiii. 8—14; and here the Israelites broke down, because they could not wait for Moses.

2. *Lean not to your own understanding.*—When men disregard the Divine authority, and follow their own devices, they are always led astray. In making the golden calf, the Jews followed their own reasonings, instead of the Word of God.

3. "*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*"

4. *Confess your sins, and do not excuse them.*—See v. 24, and compare Ps. xxxii. 5; Prov. xxviii. 13.

5. *Be warned in time.*—See v. 33. The same law is given to you, and God is as jealous of it as He ever was. Col. iii. 25.

6. *The wages of sin is death.*—They who were dancing in the morning were dying at night, v. 19, 28.

7. *Sins repeated after pardon, annul it, and expose to all the wrath which the pardon had removed.*

Questions.—What did the people ask Aaron to do? why? Of what did he make the calf? Where was Moses? How did he learn what had happened? What did God propose to him? What did Moses plead in behalf of the people? Why did he break the tables? What did he do with the calf? How did Aaron excuse himself? How were the idolaters punished? How did Moses again pray for them?

Illustration.—earrings.

See v. 2. "It was the custom of the men also, among the Israelites, to have their ears adorned with rings; and at this day, nearly all the natives of the East wear the same ornaments. Some of them are of a circular form, of two or three inches in diameter; others are more compact and massive, and have on them representations of *yalis*, serpents, and various deities. The rings of both ears often weigh more than four ounces of pure gold; and, by their weight in the ear, cause such an unsightly slit, as to be quite offensive to the eyes of Europeans."—*Roberts.*

NOVEMBER 29.—Morning Lesson.

complaints and consolation.—Psalm xlii.

For repetition, verses 1—4.

Summary.—The Psalmist, probably David, complains of his separation from the sanctuary, and of the scorn of the ungodly; but he carries his case to the Lord, and is comforted.

I. Separated from the Sanctuary.—V. 1, 2. The *hart*, faint with running from its pursuers, and oppressed with heat, *pants* for water to refresh and cool itself; and the pious soul, when separated from God, feels a similar desire for communion with Him. To *come and appear before God*, was the same as to worship Him in His sanctuary. The Psalmist had not now this privilege; and his longing for it resembled an intense *thirst*.

II. Scorned by the Wicked.—V. 3, 4. A person in very great sorrow has no desire to eat. His *tears* become, in a manner, his food.—See 1 Sam. i. 7; Job iii. 24; Ps. lxxx. 5; cii. 4. So it was with the Psalmist, his sorrow for losing the privilege of public worship being aggravated by the pitiless taunts of his enemies. They say, *Where is thy God?*—implying that God had rejected him, in cutting him off from access to the holy tabernacle; and his pain is greatly increased when he remembers his former happiness, and compares it with his present misery. This leads him to *pour out his soul* in bitter complaints and sorrowful regrets.

III. Waiting on God.—V. 5, 6.—Sad as his case was, he need not be *cast down*, if he could but *hope in God*, who would assuredly work all things well. Accordingly, from the places where his lot was now cast, he betakes himself to Him in prayer. By *the land of Jordan*—is doubtless meant the land beyond Jordan, where Mount *Hermon* was. The reference is supposed to be to David's sojourn at Mahanaim, on the further

side of Jordan, to the north of Jabbok. —See 2 Sam. xvii. 24, 27; 1 Kings ii. 8. *Mizar* means only "a little hill," and it is uncertain what hill is intended. V. 7. "The Psalmist seems to represent himself as cast away at sea; and, by wave impelling wave, is carried to a rock, around which the surges dash in all directions, forming hollow sounds in the creeks and caverns. At last, several waves breaking over him, tear him away from that rock.... He is then whelmed in the deep, and God alone can save him."—*Dr. A. Clarke.* V. 8. Even in these circumstances, God would *command* His blessing, and His servant's employment should be praise and prayer. V. 9, 10. It seemed to the Psalmist, from the circumstances in which he was placed, as if God had *forgotten* him; and the taunt of his *enemies* was like the piercing of a *sword.* V. 11. He need not give way to despair; for God would yet give him reason for thanksgiving. He would therefore rejoice in hope.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *We sometimes feel the worth of our mercies most when we have lost them.*

2. *The public means of grace are a great blessing.*

3. *Meet God in His house when you can, and He will come to you when you cannot.*

4. *Such a longing for God as the Psalmist felt is as sure a token of true piety as abounding joy in Him.*

5. *They who truly love God may be sorely distressed and afflicted.*

6. *The way to forget our miseries, is to remember our mercies.*

QUESTIONS.—For what did David long? To what did he compare his longing? What things did he remember? How was he reproached? How does he describe his distress? What was his hope?

Illustrations.—I. THE SONS OF KORAH.

See Title. "They were an important branch of the *singers* in the Kohathite division, Heman himself being a Korahite, (1 Chron. vi. 33,) and the Korahites being among those who, in Jehoshaphat's reign, 'stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high,' 2 Chron. xx. 19. Hence we find twelve Psalms dedicated, or assigned, to the sons of Korah.... As the language of several of these Psalms—as the forty-second, eighty-fourth, &c —is manifestly meant to apply to David, the title 'for the sons of Korah' probably means that they were given to them to sing in the temple-services." —*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

II. THE THIRSTY HART.

See v. 1. "David compares his longing for the living God to the panting of the hart for the waterbrooks. I have seen large flocks of these panting harts gather round the waterbrooks in the great deserts of Central Syria, so subdued by thirst, that you could approach quite near them before they fled."—*The Land and the Book.*

III. "WATERSPOUTS."

See v. 7. "Look at those clouds which hang like a heavy pall of sackcloth over the sea along the western horizon. From them, on such windy days as these, are formed waterspouts, and I have already noticed several incipient 'spouts' lengthening downward from their lower edge. These remarkable phenomena occur most frequently in spring; but I have also seen them in autumn. They are not accompanied with much rain, and between the dark stratum above and the sea, the sky is clear and bright. Here and there fragments of black vapour, shaped like long funnels, are drawn down from the clouds toward the sea, and are seen to be in violent agitation, whirling round on themselves as they are driven along by the wind. Directly beneath them the surface of the sea is also in commotion by a whirlwind, which travels onward in concert with the spout above. I have often seen the two actually unite in mid air, and rush toward the mountains, writhing, and twisting, and bending like a huge serpent, with its head in the clouds and its tail on the deep."—*Ibid.*

NOVEMBER 29.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE CENTURION AND THE WIDOW.—Luke vii. 1—17.

SUMMARY.—Jesus heals the sick servant of a believing centurion; and restores to life the only son of a widow.

I. THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.—V. 1—10. *A certain centurion,*—a Roman officer, who had command of a hundred

soldiers. *Servant*,—not one of the hundred, but "a household servant," as in Acts x. 7. *Dear unto him.*—The servant's fidelity had won his master's esteem and love. *Was sick*,—"grievously tormented," Matt. viii. 6. *The elders*,—probably, of the synagogue he had built. *Instantly*,—earnestly. They make out a good case for their foreign friend. Though by birth a Gentile, he was a Jew in heart, as was shown by his munificent benefaction. *I am not worthy.*—This is very beautiful. The elders declared him worthy, but he had a different opinion of himself. True worth is always humble. *For I also*, &c. —He here gives the reason of his faith. He occupied a middle place: there were some above him, and some below him; and he argues that, if he who was *under authority* was so readily obeyed by his inferiors, surely Jesus, who was *not* under authority, might much more command, and be obeyed. *Go, and he goeth.*—He had no need to go himself to see His orders executed; and, surely, Jesus, whose authority was absolute, need not come to his house to heal his servant.

II. The Widow's Son.—V. 11—17. Our Lord had previously healed all kinds of sicknesses; but He had not given life to the dead. He now gives this further evidence of His Divinity. Jesus meets a funeral leaving the *city of Nain*, for a cemetery in the suburbs. The corpse is that of a young man; full-grown, no doubt, as he is called a *man*. He was an *only son;* and his *widowed mother* was following, worn, and weary, and weeping. Jesus, who always sympathizes with blameless sorrow, pities her, saying, "*Weep not.*" Not that it was wrong to weep, for she could not help it, and see John xi. 35; but because He would comfort her. *He touched the bier*, or stretcher, on which the body lay, and uttered His word of power; and the *dead man* heard it, and rose and *spoke*, and lived to console and support his mother. *There came a fear on all;* and the account of this grand and awful miracle is so simple, and brief, and vivid, that we almost realize the scene; and adore and tremble with them. Compare Jer. xxxiii. 9; Matt. xxviii. 8.

Reflections.—1. *Good servants commonly find good masters.*—If a servant is capable, industrious, obliging, and conscientious, he is almost sure to find a master who will recognise his worth, and care for his interests. Such servants as the centurion's, seldom need to be "out of a place."

2. *Good masters commonly find good servants.*—Good masters are not more numerous than good servants, and they generally find each other. The service of such a master as the centurion is sure to be sought after.

3. *Death comes to all.*—The young should not put aside the thought of death, but pray with Moses, Ps. xc. 12.

4. *Jesus is all-powerful.*—As He restored dead bodies to life, so can He restore dead souls, Rom. viii. 1, 2.

5. "*His love is as great as His power.*"—He had compassion upon this disconsolate widow; and He is still "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Heb. iv. 15, 16.

Questions.—What was a centurion? What was the character of this centurion? What was his opinion of himself? What did he want? How was his faith remarkable? What did Jesus say about it? To what city did Jesus then go? What did He meet? What followed?

Illustration.—synagogues.

See v. 5. "It required ten persons to compose a synagogue. They must be men of independent property, and learned in the law. Where this number was not found, no synagogue was built; but in large towns there were several, and Jerusalem had four hundred and eighty."—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

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PRACTICAL PAPERS.

THE SCHOOL AND THE CHURCH.

WHEN the work of religious instruction is begun, the Church is bound to see that it is conducted to a right practical conclusion. When the foundation is laid, the super-structure must be reared and finished. Instruction in the first principles of the Gospel of Christ is intended to lead on to pardon, to conversion, to entire sanctification, to a life of usefulness here, and to an eternity of happiness after death.

But here the question presents itself,—How is this result to be attained? Will it, in general, and as a matter of course, arise out of what is commonly called "a religious education?" Many people at present seem to talk and act as if they supposed it would. So much has been said of late on the subject of schools, the power of early impressions, and the splendid results of education, that we now seem to think if a human being is but placed under a proper school-master for a few years in childhood, he is sure to go on well through the remaining part of his life, and that the result will be, orderly and happy families, and a peaceable and moral community. But no such extravagant hope is warranted by the language of the Bible. According to that Book, Christian communion, the fellowship of saints, is an ordinance of God, and essential to the spiritual perfection of His people. St. Paul says to the Christians, "Exhort one another daily, . . lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin:" language which very plainly intimates that even those adults who have been enlightened and converted, are not sure to do well to the end without the use of any further means. On the contrary, they must "exhort one another," and pray with one another frequently,—the Apostle says "daily,"—or, after all, they will "be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." If we would "go on unto perfection," we must imitate the first Christians; and, like them, continue in "fellowship," and "in the Apostles' doctrine," and "in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Should even the holiest of saints presumptuously reject this gracious provision, they would very likely become "weary and faint" in their minds.

Sunday-schools and daily-schools are vastly important, and indispensably necessary; still, they can only lay a foundation. If our children are to leave "the principles of the doctrine of Christ,"

and "go on unto perfection," they must be conducted out of the schools into the Church. It is there only that they will be "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," and attain to that maturity in goodness to which they are called by the Gospel of Christ.

Now, in order that the scholars may reach this most desirable goal, the Church and the schools should meet at some point. There should be no chasm between them, but a bridge leading from the one to the other. If the Church will take hold of our youth at the age of twelve or fourteen years, she may, in general, mould them to her purpose; but when a few years older, their principles and habits will have been formed independently of her, and they will pass from the schools without becoming communicants.

Unquestionably, as Methodists, our institutions ought to form a complete line from childhood to Paradise; so that children, once admitted to our schools, should never again be left to wander in the world, friendless and alone. One class of guides and companions should be prepared to take them up where another sets them down, and to lead them forward, stage after stage, till their "warfare is accomplished," and they arrive at that "city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."—*Manuscript of the late Rev. S. Jackson.*

HOW CHILDREN MAY TEACH US.

"When our children are about us," we should be careful, not only to *teach* them, but to *learn* lessons which they can teach us. Children teach lessons which are taught in no other school than the one they keep; or, at any rate, in no other so well. Although their audience sometimes is but scant, and their prelections little heeded, they go on teaching still. Since the day when that little child, unknown by name to the world, in fame immortal, stood up in the centre of the eager group at the Saviour's bidding, and, by his ingenuousness and simplicity, gave his lecture to disciples, Apostles, Pharisees, fathers and mothers, and all beholders, the children have been teaching in the kingdom; and they will teach until the last returning sinner enters as a little child into the kingdom of heaven.

They teach *faith*.—What believers they are! They hardly ever doubt. How they trust your word, your wisdom, your strength, your love, as soon as you give them the least occasion!

They teach *contentment*.—For they are pleased with little pleasures. They are happy when the sun shines; and, if the day is dark, they can find happiness under the clouds. They have not "*learned*," as yet, "in whatsoever state" they are, "therewith to be content." But they *are* content, if the outward conditions of life are tolerably

pleasant. They have no remembrance of the sorrows of yesterday, no apprehension of the tears of to-morrow.

They teach *humility*.—For they do not "exercise themselves in great matters, or in things too high for them." Their plans are short and small. If they misgive —well, never mind, they can build again. There is plenty of sand on the shore.

Ah, how well were it if we could learn from them in these respects! There is a whole group of virtues which our children, while yet they are about us, are teaching us, whether we are learning them or not. It is beautiful, and yet sad, to see the children teaching when the parents and others are not learning. The parents, perhaps, have their plans of social ambition, and are striving hard to rise. The children are content if the sun is bright, if grass is green, if flowers are pretty, if bread is sweet and water cool, if the floor is firm enough to walk upon, and the bed is soft enough for sleep. The parents have their cares and their fears lest they should have to go downward in the social scale. Because they are a little poorer than once, they are going to lose some of their friends. (What worthy friends they must be! and O, what a sorrowful pity to lose them!) Or, they are going into a smaller house, because, perhaps, they do not any longer need the larger, or because it is now a little above their circumstances. They will go away sometimes into another neighbourhood, just that they may go down that little incline unseen. "The children," all this time, would take any friends that were pleasant, — cottagers' children, workmen's children, would do quite well. A few hours would suffice to begin a real friendship. They would go to any house that sheltered them, and be pleased with the little rooms as a nice change from the larger. Nay, they would go with you if you had not got a house to go to at all. They would wander with you, cheerily enough, along country lanes, and beside hedgerows and old walls. They would sleep with you by hayricks and in harvest-fields, or under the shelter of the trees, soothed and rocked to rest, unless the weather were too chill, by the music of the pines, and pleased by the new lamplight of the stars.

If it be said that a good deal of *such* contentment is the result of sheer ignorance, and, therefore, cannot be seriously proposed to reasonable persons for their instruction or imitation; a good answer is, that the cares and anxieties of grown-up people are largely the fruit of mere imagination and mistake. They conjure up difficulties which have no real existence, they fear evils that never come; they are poor often in imaginary poverty; sick with pains they never feel; dark when the sun is shining; dying and dead a hundred times before the real dying, and the one only death "appointed," come. Surely, therefore, it were well if the care-furrowed faces of father and mother could in any way catch, at least, *a little* of the smoothness, and openness, and "sufficient-unto-the-day" look of their "children when they are about them."—*Alexander Raleigh, D.D.*

SUNDAY-SCHOOL ADDRESSES.

The business of giving addresses to Sunday-school children has risen in magnitude within the last few years, till it is now one of the prominent adjuncts of juvenile religious education. Twenty years ago it was comparatively a rare thing to hear an address in a Sunday-school. The idea of showing politeness to a visiter, by inviting him to inflict a talk on the school, without regard to his ability to interest the children, never then occurred to Superintendents. Once, in a long while, a Missionary, just returned from the end of the world, or some other place, would offer an account of what he had done and seen. Occasionally the agent of some "cause" would have a brief hearing: but the institution, as it now exists, was then almost unknown. It has gradually risen, and worked its way up to such a degree of respectability and prominence, that children have learned to look for a speech from somebody—good, bad, or indifferent—as a matter of course; just as butter is expected with bread, or sugar with tea and coffee.

Making a speech to a company of Sunday-school children is productive of good or evil, according to whether it is good or bad. A stirring, earnest speech on the subject of their lesson, or on some subject connected with it, may wisely be thrown in at almost any time. A wise man may rise at an appropriate time, and offer some remarks which may be productive of good; some stupid or silly orator follows him, and the children forget all that the good man told them. Or, when the children have finished the appointed time for study, and are ready to go home, some tedious talker mounts the desk, and lets his thoughts loose for the space of half an hour. The thought of interesting his hearers has not occurred to him. All he cares for is, that he may have a hearing. All that his wearied hearers care for is, that he may get done as soon as possible, and let them go home. Of course such a speech is nothing but a nuisance.

The principal object of an address is supposed to be to do the children some good, and so to glorify God. But the hearers of one hundred Sunday-school addresses might well wonder if ninety of them were delivered with any object in view; or, if the speakers had any object, what it was. One speaker may utter a delightful string of talk, made up of stories and illustrations. It interests the children, and, at first thought, would seem to be a useful address; but, when you try to digest it, the stories seem to be without point, and the illustrations not brought in for the sake of illustrating anything in particular. Another speaker spends his time in saying things to make the children laugh. He succeeds in that; for children are easily amused, and will sometimes laugh if the speaker only makes a funny face at them. It would not be a great calamity, if some able-bodied Christian should take hold of the man who speaks only for the sake of buffoonery, and violently put him out. It would at least save a repetition of the foolishness, by the same man, on the same set of children.

Verily our poor children are imposed upon with a great variety of this kind of entertainment. For every really excellent address that is made, it is safe to say there are ten which fail to accomplish any good. The amount of profitable instruction conveyed in the majority is exceedingly slender. It is astonishing to see how much chaff we give the little people, in order that they may have a grain or two of wheat. We torture them by making them listen to all sorts of people who have not the gift of instructing or entertaining them. The long-winded man, whose

stream of volubility flows like a river; the anecdote man, with his curious and pointless stories; the illustrative man, who uses a great many illustrations to illustrate nothing; the man of one pet idea, who continuously ventilates that idea alike before old age and youth; the man who has only one speech, which he uses on all occasions; the dull man, who puts us to sleep; the stupid man, to whose discourse we cannot by any possibility give attention; the disagreeable man, to whom we do not want to attend; the tiresome man, to whom we listen only in the hope that he will soon be done; the gloomy man, who renders religion as terrible as possible to the children: all these men find their way into our Sunday-schools with a degree of enterprise and pertinacity which would be commendable, if their labours were well and wisely put forth. It requires great firmness in the Superintendent to avoid having all these people inflict themselves on the school; and somebody's feelings are hurt when he neglects, or refuses, to invite one who is known to be an unprofitable orator, who has come, expecting to have his say.—*Evangelical Record.*

DO THE CHILDREN JOIN IN OUR PRAYERS?

A SAD fact, in some schools, is the lack of the gift of prayer in the teachers, and the little interest seemingly felt by the children in the opening and closing prayer. Who has not witnessed the listlessness and irksome restraint, and the rustling sound from hundreds of little feet and voices, immediately after the utterance of the Amen, as if that were the most welcome word?

Is this restlessness the fault of the children, or of the teachers, or of the leader of the prayer, or of all combined?

Whilst conceding the fact of infantile depravity, we would yet ask if the indifference alluded to may not sometimes be increased by the want of discipline? The leader of the prayer sometimes commences his supplication before every teacher has secured the perfect stillness and proper attitude of every child in his class. Now such a scene of confusion repels from the youthful mind all thoughts of the greatness of God, and of the solemnity of prayer. Moreover, it may be asked, if we can unteach as well as teach by example, what must be the effect of seeing one or more teachers or officers whispering, or sorting books, or walking across the school-room during the devotional service? Children observing these anomalies will prove severe critics, and will "bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words; that they may shoot in secret" at the erring teacher.

To secure the right deportment during prayer, let the teacher use his tongue and hand less, and his eye more. There is no noise in a look; it disturbs not even your neighbour; it is most penetrating; it turns every way, and there is no escape from it. What a speaking eye has many a teacher! In sanctuary-service one such eye may be fastened on fifty children, and keep them all still. Nor need it be a dagger-eye, that darts terror, to ward off the lion and tiger; but an eye that has Mrs. Fry's "look of love," and makes you feel the greater power of gentleness. Why should so many teachers, then, close their eyes during prayer, and stand *behind* the children, forgetting the power of an eye meeting an eye?

But is there nothing in the prayer itself that may account for the little interest felt by the children?

1. Is not the prayer sometimes cold, lifeless, mechanical as a prayer-mill? Does it not enter the soul like a biting frost, and nip all good desires, causing the child to shrink from it? Nothing

can reach a heart but a heart. The Spirit never indites a heartless prayer. One Sabbath evening a father knelt down with his household in family-prayer, and, touched with the sight of two dear little ones by his side, his prayer became unusually tender and fervent; soon was heard a sobbing; it was a little heart deeply affected by the father's earnestness.

2. The language used is often unsuitable. We remember having read a book for the young, in which the writer went out of his way to find hard words, and put at the bottom of the pages foot-notes explanatory of them! Very recently a friend heard a village-preacher state that "the Jews stoned, that is, *lapidated* our Lord." The wrong word conceals the idea, and misrepresents it. "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words;" and so will the pious, educated teacher. What a model of simplicity is the Lord's Prayer. Get the right word, and put it in the right place, if you wish the children to follow in your prayer.

3. Some prayers are tedious because of their length. "The long prayer" in the pulpit is not so trying to the patience, as the long prayer in the school. Without saying how many minutes should be allowed, we would say to the teacher, "Let thy words be few." Often a short prayer contains more than a long one. If you would say all that is necessary in a few minutes, learn to leave out all that is irrelevant, all fine words, all personalities, all mannerisms, all bits of sermonizing, all explanations, all conclusions but one, all vain repetitions of God's name, — as, for example, the distressingly frequent utterance of the words, "O God!" Use the pruning-hook, and cut off redundances—those deadening excrescences.

Let the words be simple, the sentences short, and separated by slight pauses, that others may not only listen, but follow in the prayer.

As there are several prayers on the Sabbath, the topics may be distributed rather than repeated.

4. The matter of the prayer is sometimes unsuitable. In praying with children, only as we express *their* wants will they join in the supplication. Proper allusions to children's sorrows will touch a chord. We should make a confession of sin, but take care not to charge children with particular sins of which they are not guilty. To some confessions there can be no response, and often will there be awakened the feeling of false accusation. The writer was once in a court of justice, when a person wishing to help a prisoner at the bar, made the following slip:— "Possibly he may occasionally be the worse for drink, of which sin we are all guilty!" and a voice was soon heard in the court, "Please to speak for yourself." So allude to children's faults as to awaken the response, "Remember not the sins of my youth."

How many errors in public prayer would be avoided if the leader of prayer rose, not to say something, but because he had something to say. And how can this something be known and felt so well as by rehearsing his prayer, so to speak, first in his own closet? Such a preparation would make him feel his solemn responsibility, and deepen his humility.

The subject of this paper might well be made the topic of conversation at a teachers' meeting.

What a time of refreshing to the Sunday-school will it be when the opening prayer shall be so valued that every teacher and every child shall strive to be in time to join in it.—*The Sunday-School Teacher.*

SCHOOL SKETCHES.

PROCRASTINATION.

One fine Sunday afternoon, in October, 1860, the teachers and children of a Sunday-school in the southern district of the Metropolis were waiting for the gates to be opened, when the attention of the teacher of the senior girls' class was directed to a gaily dressed young person, who was passing along the end of the street. She had at one time belonged to the class, but had not been to the school for some months. The lady who formerly had charge of the class, on leaving for India, had specially committed her to the care of this teacher; but, as yet, all efforts to persuade her to return to the school had been unsuccessful. Whenever the subject was named, she put it off till another time. With the hope that this might be a turning-point for good, the teacher went to speak to her, and gave her another invitation to come and hear of Jesus. She made several frivolous excuses, and at length said she was going to a pleasure-party on the river with some companions, so she could not come that day. With the feeling that it might be "now or never," the writer affectionately warned her of the consequences of Sabbath-breaking, and pleaded with her to give up those companions, and to change her course; telling her of the love of Jesus, and warning her of the consequences of sin.

Alas! remonstrance and entreaty were alike of no avail; her only answer was, "Perhaps I will next Sunday." The conversation closed, with an appeal to give herself to the Saviour, whether she came again to the school or not.

She passed on her way. The teacher and her class went into school, but her thoughts and prayers followed the poor girl. Nothing is known of the occurrences of the afternoon. Fanny returned home in the evening apparently well; she spent the night with her sister, and went to her work at a dressmaker's, on Monday. While there, it was noticed that she appeared to be in low spirits, and in the afternoon she was seized with what seemed to be a fainting fit. When she recovered, her mistress and one of the work-people accompanied her home. They had not proceeded far, when an epileptic attack came on. With great difficulty she was conveyed home, and every means of recovery tried, but without success, each approach to it being followed by a relapse; so that her mother, when, in response to a hasty message, she hurried to her child, could not recognise her. Attack succeeded attack till about midnight, when she died without the slightest sign of intelligent consciousness.

From the nature of the seizure she could not have been aware of her danger, and it was impossible to address any word of advice then, or to ask her any questions. The writer learned from Fanny's mother, that her daughter had gone on the excursion against her wishes, and in defiance of warning. The poor woman, herself a Christian, lamented deeply that, while she had tried to teach her children rightly, she had neglected to curb their will in early childhood; for after they grew up, and she wished to restrain them, her efforts were only met by scorn. Her daughter's last words, when parting from her on the Saturday, had been most unkind and rude.

Reader! we would ask you to ponder this sad narrative. Are you a parent? we would urge you not to be content with telling your children what is right, but resolutely insist that in childhood their will shall yield to yours. Could you have seen the agony of that mother while speaking of her

child, you would, we think, have resolved to do all in your power to restrain your children. The danger of trifling with the command, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is also illustrated in the history of this family. Fanny's mother had married, as a second husband, one who was a stranger to God, and whose bad conduct reduced them from comparative competence to poverty. To his influence she ascribed the first open deviation of her daughter from the right path.

But it is chiefly to those who, like the subject of this narrative, are young, and bright, with life before them,—the senior scholars in our schools, who know the right path, and intend some time to walk in it,—that we would especially address a few words of warning. We would say, "Do not put off. 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.'" Fanny intended to do better on the following Sabbath; but, like many more, she resolved to have her own way first. Little did she think that before another Sabbath she would be in eternity; and that a week later, at the same hour as that when she rejected the offered warning and tripped off to join her thoughtless companions, a few sad mourners would be following her remains to the cemetery. What an illustration of God's word, "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

You have now another warning, another invitation addressed to you. Perhaps it may be the last. Do not reject it. We would say, "Come at once to the Saviour; come to Him with the simple, prevailing prayer, 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.' 'My Father, Thou art the Guide of my youth.'" So shall you be guided by Him here; and, whether life or death, joy or sorrow, be your portion, you will have an unchanging Friend. Perhaps this account may fall into the hands of some who, like Fanny, are tempted to break God's holy day, and to forsake the society of those who would lead them to Jesus. Satan has many ways of setting evil before us as good, and good as evil. Sayings such as these he freely suggests and sanctions: "I need a little fresh air; I am so closely confined during the week, there can be no harm in a little stroll, just for once;" or, "I am too old to come to school;" or, "Next Sunday I will go, for I do not mean always to neglect God's house;" or, "Some time I will think seriously." Thus he seeks to entrap the unwary. O! do not listen to his suggestions. This may be the turning-point of your history, for good or evil. Much rather would we tell you only of the love of Jesus; but truth, and love to your soul, forbid it. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

This sad, but true, account is written with the hope that some may be induced to take warning, and resolve to give up their own evil way, not to-morrow, but NOW. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

B.

NARRATIVES AND INCIDENTS.

"IN SEASON, OUT OF SEASON."

AN earnest Christian, travelling in a steamboat on one of our large rivers, distributed among the passengers a quantity of tracts. Among those to whom this good man offered his tracts was a bold infidel; who, taking the tract from the hand of his fellow-traveller, folded it, and, cutting it into scraps, scattered them about the deck,

uttering, as he did so, an expression of contempt for such things. One little scrap lodged upon his coat; and, putting out his hand to brush it aside, his eye fell upon the words "God" and "eternity." He started, for the words had pierced his heart. He tried, by resorting to intoxication, and by mingling in gay scenes, to shut out the terrible thoughts which those words brought to his soul; but go where he might, engage in business, or mingle in what society he would, still "God" and "eternity" rang in his ears, and he found no peace for his troubled spirit until he found it in Jesus. Then, with a zeal like that of the Apostle Paul, he went forth, preaching the faith which once he destroyed.

A stranger, stopping for the night in one of our cities, found his way to the house of prayer. He was not a Christian, and scarcely knew what impulse moved him to seek such a place. It was early, and he found only the sexton present. Soon a plain man entered and took a seat by the stranger, to whom, after addressing a few commonplace remarks, he said, "I trust you love the Saviour." The stranger was deeply moved. Never before had any one manifested so much interest in his spiritual welfare; and he thought, "If this man, who knows nothing of me, cares for my soul, shall not I be interested? If Jesus loved me with a love so great that He was willing to die for me, shall I not love Him in return? If He gave His life for me, shall I not give Him my heart?" He did give himself to Jesus, and could soon say, "I do love the Saviour."

A lady engaged in a benevolent work met a young soldier, who was living very far from God. As one that cared for his soul, she warned him to "flee from the wrath to come," and pointed him to Jesus as the sinner's only Refuge; at the same time giving him a Bible, and urging him to give heed to its counsels and its warnings. God blessed the words thus spoken to the conversion of that young man.

A mother was dying. She loved the Saviour, and was willing to go to Him; but it was hard to leave her little son. She had taught his infant lips to lisp "Our Father." Many times she had told him that "sweet story of old." From her lips he had learned hymns of praise; but she feared that, with no one to impress upon his mind the truths she had so carefully taught, they would soon fade away, and he would grow up unmindful of his mother's God. To calm her fears, sweet promises from God's Word came to her mind; and, resting in the assurance that "He is faithful that promised," she sweetly "fell asleep in Jesus." Years passed, and the boy grew to manhood "having no hope, and without God in the world," and he "cared for none of these things." Passing a church, one Sabbath morning, sweet strains of music floated out to him on the still air. He paused a moment to listen, and the lines of a hymn, which he had learned at his mother's knee, and which had been for years forgotten, came to his ears. He was strangely moved. Thoughts of his mother came to him, of her prayers for him, her blameless life, and her triumphant death. His own trusting childhood passed before him, and, in fearful contrast, the sins of his later years; and he shuddered at the review. He was miserable, but he could not, dared not, leave the place. Something impelled him to enter the sanctuary; and there, for the first time in a long course of years, he listened to the Word of Life, and it was to the saving of his soul.

THE LITTLE GIRL IN COURT.

The following fact forcibly illustrates the simplicity and power of truth, and

the importance of early training in Bible principles:—

A little girl, nine years of age, was offered as a witness against a prisoner who was on trial for a felony committed in her father's house.

"Now, Emily," said the counsel for the prisoner, upon her being offered as a witness, "I desire to know if you understand the nature of an oath?"

"I don't know what you mean," was the simple answer.

"There, your honour," said the counsel, addressing the court; "is anything necessary to demonstrate the validity of my objection? This witness should be rejected. She does not comprehend the nature of an oath."

"Let us see," said the judge. "Come here, my daughter."

Assured by the kind tone and manner of the judge, the child stepped toward him, with a calm, clear eye, and in a manner so artless and frank, that it went straight to the heart.

"Did you ever take an oath?" inquired the judge.

The little girl stepped back, with a look of horror, and the red blood mantled in a blush all over her face and neck, as she answered, "No, Sir."

She thought he intended to inquire if she had ever blasphemed.

"I do not mean that," said the judge, who saw her mistake; "I mean, were you ever a witness before?"

"No, Sir; I never was in court before," was the answer.

He handed her the Bible open.

"Do you know that Book, my daughter?"

She looked at it, and answered, "Yes, Sir; it is the Bible."

"Do you ever read it?" he asked.

"Yes, Sir; every evening."

"Can you tell me what the Bible is?" inquired the judge.

"It is the Word of the Great God," she answered.

"Well, place your hand upon this Bible, and listen to what I say;" and he repeated, slowly and solemnly, the oath usually administered to witnesses.

"Now," said the judge, "you have sworn as a witness, will you tell me what will befall you if you do not tell the truth?"

"I shall be shut up in prison," answered the child.

"Anything else?" asked the judge.

"I shall never go to heaven," she replied.

"How do you know this?" asked the judge again.

The child took the Bible; and, turning rapidly to the chapter containing the Commandments, pointed to the injunction, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." "I learned that before I could read."

"Has any one talked with you about your being a witness in court here against this man?" inquired the judge.

"Yes, Sir;" she replied. "My mother heard they wanted me to be a witness; and last night she called me to her room, and asked me to tell her the Ten Commandments; and then we kneeled down together, and she prayed that I might understand how wicked it was to 'bear false witness against' my 'neighbour,' and that God would help me—a little child—to tell the truth as it was before Him. And when I came up here with father, she kissed me, and told me to remember the Ninth Commandment, and that God would hear every word that I said."

"Do you believe this?" asked the judge, while a tear glistened in his eye, and his lip quivered with emotion.

"Yes, Sir;" said the child, with a voice and manner that showed her conviction of its truth was perfect.

"God bless you, my child," said the judge; "you have a good mother. This witness is competent," he con-

tinued. "Were I on trial for my life, and innocent of the charge against me, I would pray God for such witnesses as this. Let her be examined."

She told her story with the simplicity of a child, as she was; but there was a directness about it which carried conviction of its truth to every heart. She was rigidly cross-examined. The counsel plied her with infinite and ingenious questioning, but she varied from her first statement in nothing. The truth as spoken by that little child was sublime. Falsehood and perjury had preceded her testimony. The prisoner had intrenched himself in lies, till he deemed himself impregnable. Witnesses had falsified facts in his favour, and villany had manufactured for him a sham defence. But before her testimony falsehood was scattered like chaff. The little child, for whom a mother had prayed for strength to be given her to speak the truth as it was before God, broke the cunning devices of matured villany to pieces like a potter's vessel. The strength that her mother prayed for was given her, and the sublime and terrible simplicity—terrible, I mean, to the prisoner and his associates—with which she spoke, was like a revelation from God Himself.—*Shining Light.*

ILLUSTRATED CATECHISM AIDS.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SMITH.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE FIRST CATECHISM.

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

December 13.—SECTION V., QUESTION XXII.

(*Seventh Commandment.*)

Jemima of Fiji.

A YOUNG woman, a native of one of the Fijian islands, heard the Missionaries preach, yielded to the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and obtained salvation. The king, who lived in an island at a considerable distance, heard that she was beautiful, and resolved to have her as one of his wives. The young woman, who had been baptized by the name of "Jemima," knew that this would be very sinful. The Missionary (the Rev. James Calvert) asked her if she meant to be married to the king. Jemima said,—"No, it would be wicked." "Will you rather die than sin?" "I will!" The king, however, had been accustomed to have his own way, and to have any man or woman clubbed to death who vexed him. He sailed with a fleet of canoes to fetch Jemima. All that she, and the Missionaries, and Christian natives could do, was to pray. God helped them. A great storm arose. The king could not, by any means, reach the island where Jemima lived. He was dreadfully afraid of being drowned, because the storm became so terrible. At length he was glad to get back without Jemima.

Dec. 20.—SECT. V., QUEST. XXII.

(*Eighth Commandment.*)

Vic Doyle.

VICTOR, or Vic Doyle, was not a rosy, merry boy, with a good home and many friends. He was very thin and pale, very old-looking, and lived in a cellar with his only relative, a drunken stepmother. Vic seldom had enough to eat, and never enough to wear. All through the winter he shivered with cold, and suffered greatly from his frost-bitten toes. In summer the corrupt air of the damp and filthy cellar made him wretched. Vic, however, had been taught to read by his father, who died when his boy was eight years old. Vic got his living by searching the gutters. On Sunday he went to the Mission-school, and there learned about Jesus and heaven. One October morning he found a little gold pin, with a shining stone in it. Vic knew that it was valuable. But he ran with it to a newspaper-office, and asked the manager to let it be known. When questioned why he had not sold it, Vic replied,—"I've been to the Mission-school, and I cannot steal and grieve the Lord Jesus Christ." The owner gave Vic only sixpence. But he got a good situation in the newspaper-office, and grew up a respectable and happy man.

Dec. 27.—Sect. V., Quest. XXII.

(*Ninth Commandment.*)

Bessie and Benny.

A little girl, called Bessie, was nursing baby, one day. She was not an ill-natured girl, and was regarded as truthful and honest. But it so happened that she was about to be subjected to temptation in an unexpected manner. Bessie had a beautiful rose which she greatly prized. The bright colour of the flower attracted the attention of baby; and, before Bessie observed the mischief going on, baby's little hands had pulled the flower leaf from leaf. Bessie was so irritated, that she gave baby a severe slap, and baby at once began to scream. Their mother overheard the noise, and, hastily approaching, asked, "Who has struck baby?" Little Benny was playing close by; and Bessie, yielding to a sudden and bad impulse, intimated that he was the offender. Poor Benny was not old enough to make a very clear defence, and was whipped. Unhappy Bessie, day by day, wished to confess her fault; but, before she could muster resolution, little Benny sickened and died. Bessie wept bitterly then, and acknowledged her sin. But years afterwards she was sorry, when she thought of her untruthfulness.

Jan. 3, 1869.—Sect. V., Quest. XXII.

(*Tenth Commandment.*)

Andrew Marvell.

In the reign of Charles II., Andrew Marvell was chosen by the borough of Hull, and maintained by the people of Hull, to watch over the public welfare. He resided in London; and, as his salary was not large, he was sometimes in straitened circumstances. This was known by those who were disposed to trample on the liberties of the people. With a view to bribe him, the Lord High-Treasurer Danby, who had once been his schoolfellow, sought out Marvell in the garret which he occupied. At parting, Danby placed in the hands of Marvell an order on the Treasury for £1000, and hastened to his chariot. Marvell saw at once that the money was meant as a bribe. He called to the Treasurer, and requested him to step back for a moment. He then called for the little lad who attended on him. "Jack, what had I to-dinner yesterday?" "A small shoulder of mutton." "What have I to-day?" "You said I must broil the bladebone." "That is right, Jack." The lad departed. Then Marvell said, "You see, my lord, I need no bribes. My dinner is provided." Had Marvell coveted the wealth and grandeur of others, he might have yielded to their enticements.

AIDS TO THE USE OF THE SECOND CATECHISM.

December 13.—Sect. IX., Quest. VIII.

The Final Separation.

Many separations take place during the present life. Some of these are much more solemn than others. It is very affecting, for instance, to look upon aged parents who are bidding farewell to children going to Australia, New-Zealand, or some other distant part of the world. However those who are parting may try to console each other, they know that it is not likely they will ever meet again in this world. That is touching; but no other separation can be so solemn as that which must take place at the bar of God. Those who part there will never again meet.

Unexpected separation for life.—You have read of a foolish mother who wickedly persuaded her favourite son to deceive his aged father. What was the mother's name? The name of her favourite son? The name of the father? The name of Isaac's other son? After Jacob had thus wronged his brother, Rebekah was afraid that Esau would kill Jacob so soon as their father was dead. She therefore sent Jacob away, as she said, for "a few days." (Gen. xxvii.) It does not seem that they met again on earth.

Painful separation by death.—There was a famine in the land of Israel during the days of the judges. A family, from near Bethlehem, went to the land of Moab that they might obtain bread. The family consisted of father, mother, and two sons. After a time, the mother started on her return home; but her husband was dead, and both her sons. The name of the mother? Of the father and sons? Who returned with Naomi? (Ruth i.)

Dreadful separation for ever.—One of David's sons was very wicked, and at length rebelled against his father with the hope of obtaining the crown. Name of the unworthy young man? How was Absalom's death occasioned? When David learned the result of the battle,

he knew that his throne was secure. Did he feel glad? What did he say and do? (2 Sam. xviii. 33.)

EXERCISES.—Will all who live together on earth, dwell together in the unseen world? By what rule will they be divided? What was the most affecting separation you ever witnessed? What will be the most solemn separation of all?

Dec. 20.—SECT. IX., QUESTS. IX., X., AND XI.

Judicial Investigation.

At appointed times, in every county of Great Britain, Assizes are held, when all possible care is taken to convict wrong-doers, and administer suitable punishment. But everybody knows that many crimes remain undetected, and many criminals escape unpunished. In a still larger number of instances, those who (though sorely tempted to do wrong) have striven to act nobly and righteously, remain without reward; and some even suffer painful privation. But there will be no such incompleteness in the Great Assize which will finally be held by the Son of God.

Nothing will remain concealed.—There were once only two brothers in the whole world. What were the names of these two brothers? Which was the elder of the two? Which was the better of the two? Which of the two died first? What was the occasion of Abel's death? Why did Cain kill him? We may reasonably suppose that no human being saw the cruel murder perpetrated. Either Adam or Eve would have tried to save the life of their son Abel. But the Lord God knew all about the sad transaction. To Him the blood thus shed had a "voice." (Gen. iv. 9, 10.)

Every sentence will be righteous.—When David fled from Jerusalem, many of the people who were faithful to him went with him, to share his fate and to aid, if possible, in his restoration. David had been very kind to one of Saul's sons, and had made him wealthy. Yet he did not accompany the king. Name of Saul's son? When David returned, Mephibosheth presented himself. David inquired why he had not gone with him. Mephibosheth said, that his servant Ziba had deprived him of the means of doing so. (2 Sam. xix. 24—30.) Ziba, however, had made a very different statement. (2 Sam. xvi. 1—4.) David was perplexed. He did not know how to decide. God's judgments will all be correct.

EXERCISES.—Are all things at once brought to light? Will anything remain concealed for ever? Are all things known to God now? Can human beings always decide aright when they wish so to do? Who is the unerring and all-righteous Judge?

Dec. 27.—SECT. IX., QUEST. XII.

The Doom of the Wicked.

Learn the reply, and the first of the texts appended. Then let us, with great seriousness, consider the awful fate which is appointed to the finally impenitent. The subject is a very solemn one. But warning is not so terrible as ruin. We had better be informed of the danger, and so avoid the evil, than pass on in ignorance and heedlessness, until we fall into the dread abyss. The traveller may be saved if he is made acquainted with the precipice before him. The ship's crew may avoid destruction if warned of the rock in time. He needs to be cautioned who walks near the lair of the lion.

The punishment of the wicked will be dreadful.—"There was a certain rich man" who was intent solely on his own gratification. He had much wealth intrusted to him; but he did not regard himself as God's steward, nor endeavour to secure the Divine approval. When he died, what was done with his body? Most likely there was a costly display at his funeral. What became of his soul? (Luke xvi. 23, 24.)

The punishment of the wicked will be irresistible.—There was once a king surrounded by a number of people who were very anxious to secure his favour. He made a speech to them. They pretended to think that the king's eloquence was more than human. They called him a god, and he accepted the wicked flattery. What was the king's name? What became of him? (Acts xii. 20—23.) Herod could not save himself.

The punishment of the wicked will be eternal.—The Lord Jesus declared concerning one, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." That unhappy individual was, at the

time, numbered among the twelve; but had already yielded his heart to Satan, and was about to betray his Master. The name of the wretched traitor? In the unseen world those who are wicked must ever be miserable.

EXERCISES.—Can you mention any ways in which sin makes people unhappy during this life? Will wicked people be altogether miserable in the life to come? Do transgressors ever escape punishment in this life? Can they do so in the other world? After death will the wicked ever be happy?

Jan. 3, 1869.—SECT. IX., QUEST. XII.

(*Concluded.*)

The Bliss of the Righteous.

Learn the three texts which were left. Then let us thankfully reflect on the happiness provided for those who are accounted righteous by Almighty God. Their sins have been pardoned through God's mercy in Christ Jesus, and their hearts have been renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost. They are, therefore, regarded by God as worthy to enter in by the gates into the city. We ought to be greatly encouraged in our efforts to gain the required preparation.

Departed saints enter into immediate joy.—Two men were crucified at the same time as our blessed Lord was thus cruelly put to death. These two men had been very wicked? Did they both remain impenitent? Do you recollect what prayer one of them offered to the Saviour? What reply did Jesus make? (Luke xxiii. 42, 43.) On the very day of His death, this penitent sinner, because pardoned and renewed, would be with Christ "in Paradise." There is no Purgatory.

Departed saints enter into glorious joy.—Two good men have been allowed to enter heaven without dying. One of them lived before the flood. What was his name? One since the flood. His name? Enoch and Elijah were thus translated. Their bodies were changed by God's power. Are the bodies of all God's saints to be freed from pain, and sickness, and feebleness? To whose body are they to be made like? Body and soul, reunited and glorified, are to be happy in heaven.

Departed saints enter into endless joy.—The reward of the righteous is sometimes spoken of as a crown. Those who had been very successful, and whom people desired to honour very greatly, were often crowned with a garland of evergreens. So the reward of God's faithful people is spoken of as a crown. But it is "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Peter v. 4.) A garland of laurel would wither, and eventually crumble into dust, whatever care was bestowed on it.

EXERCISES.—Whom did Christ take with Him to Paradise? Do God's saints suffer after death? Will the bodies of God's saints be glorified? Will the joy of God's people be complete? Will there be any end of their blessedness?

ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS.

Loss of the "Rothsay-Castle."

ON the 17th of August, 1831, the steam-vessel, "Rothsay-Castle" sailed from Liverpool. Her voyage was not expected to prove a long one. She was one of the line of steamers sailing from Liverpool to Beaumaris and the Menai Bridge. As it was summer-time, many persons, intent on pleasure, were on board; amongst them being a party of twenty-six persons from Bury, in Lancashire. A pilot, who had just returned from a foreign voyage, went, among others, for a day's recreation. Many besides, from Manchester and other places, promised themselves much enjoyment. Near midnight the vessel arrived at the entrance of the Menai Straits, about five miles from Beaumaris. At that hour the ship struck on the rocks. There is reason to think that the captain and others in charge of the steamer had taken so much liquor, as to disqualify them for their duty, though not so much as to render them insensible. However the catastrophe was occasioned, it proved heart-rending. In a short time, about a hundred of those on board had passed into the eternal world. It is to be feared that some of these had thought little of any preparation for death, until thus unexpectedly summoned into the presence of God. It is known, however, that there were several, at least, who had long been living for God, and to whom the change, though solemn, would be glorious. But the separation must take place. A few hours earlier those passengers had met. They must part, under those awful circumstances, to meet no more on earth. Each must enter the world of spirits alone. Whether the separation would prove final or not, depended on the righteous judgment of God concerning their conduct and character. (No. II., *December* 13.)

Ellen and Sophia.

A GOOD man, who had passed through many trials, had begun to think that the worst was passed. Hitherto he had barely been able to support his wife and two children, and educate the latter. The son and daughter were, however, becoming useful, and there seemed reason to hope that their father would see them comfortably settled before he should be called home to heaven. But in one week, during the month of July, 1832, the father, mother, and son were removed by cholera. Ellen, the daughter, was left alone. She obtained a good situation, and would have been well cared for, had it not been for the envy of a wicked fellow-servant, called Sophia. This girl hated Ellen, because she was a professor of religion, and highly esteemed by the mistress. The base girl contrived to get a silver thimble belonging to their mistress, and, afterwards, a gold pencil-case, and hide them in Ellen's box, so as to make the mistress regard Ellen as a thief. The pious girl was turned away in disgrace. But God, who will bring all actions, however secret, into judgment, knew all about this. Ellen was taken ill. It was evident that she must soon die. A friend had, however, been raised up to provide for her, and Ellen only desired her innocence to be made apparent. That being done, she felt she could die in peace, and rejoin her much loved ones in heaven. God laid his hand on wicked Sophia. She suddenly sickened, and had no hope of recovery. She dared not die without confession of her vile and cruel conduct. She sent for the mistress, and told her all. The mistress, though with much difficulty, found out Ellen, and remained with her, as a mother, until Jesus took her to Himself. (No. II., *December* 20.)

James Burroughs.

MANCHESTER has not been an assize-city many years. Judges had gone to York, and Chester, and Gloucester, during several generations, before any judge went to Manchester, to hold an ordinary court of assize. The first criminal executed in Manchester, after it was constituted an assize-city, was a youth not quite nineteen years old. His name was James Burroughs. He had been guilty of the awful crime of murder, and had been convicted, and must die on the gallows. Many pitied the wretched young man, yet were fully satisfied that he deserved the awful doom which awaited him. It was inexpressibly sad for one so young to be put to death. Those who had access to him in the condemned cell, believed that he was really sorry for his crime. On one occasion he exclaimed: "What will become of John Brennan's poor wife and children? If I had any money, I would leave it all to them." He asked one who visited him, if he would be so kind as to do a little to help those whom his own awful sin had made a widow and orphans. He bitterly regretted that he had neglected God's house, that he had neglected the warnings of good people, that he had gone to the ale-bench, and that he had trifled with God's mercy. There was some reason to hope that he obtained salvation. But he had committed the cruel deed, and must die as a murderer. On the 25th of August, 1866, he passed to his account. How dreadful the condition of those who so persist in sin, that no mercy remains for them with the Judge eternal. (No. II. *December* 27.)

The Rev. Robert Newton, D.D.

MOST Methodists, and myriads besides, who lived during the former half of the nineteenth century, heard with delight the voice of the Rev. Robert Newton, proclaiming "the unsearchable riches of Christ." During more than half a century he was engaged in the full work of the Christian ministry, and extended his efforts to every part of Great Britain. He visited America in 1840, as the representative of the British Conference, was President of the Conference in England four times, and did much to establish Wesleyan Missions. But, at length, his herculean labours were over. Reward was nigh! He who had faithfully toiled for Christ, was graciously sustained by Christ. The Gospel he had so eloquently preached was his comfort when he could preach no more. As the end drew nigh, he was asked if he still felt Christ to be precious. He replied, "O, yes! Christ Jesus attesting and blessing. Christ is mine, and I am His. Christ is my Rock." On the morning previous to his death, he said: "The preaching that flows from the heart does good every day." "Christ Jesus, the Ransom of sinners, and the Life of the dead." "I am going to glory!" "Farewell, sin; farewell, death." "Praise the Lord!" Thus the closing scene of this eminent man of God was a blessed triumph. He entered the glorious rest, on the morning of April 30th, 1854. (No. II. *January* 3, 1869.)

BIBLE-LESSONS FOR INFANT-CLASSES.

December 6.—The Power of Prayer.

EXOD. xxxiii. 17: "Thou hast found grace in My sight."

1. *The prayer of Moses.* — Do you remember the great sin of the people of Israel while Moses was on the mountain? How were they punished? Besides this, God in His anger said that He would not go with them to the land of Canaan, but would send an angel to go before them. The people mourned when they heard these evil tidings. Moses, too, was full of grief and fear. He knew something of the dangers of the way, and how sad their lot would be without God to help him, and to care for the people. But what could Moses do? Could he take away their sin? or undo what they had done? No, but *he could pray for them.* And he did this. He said, "I will go up unto the Lord." Then he prayed for himself, and for the people, and said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy way."

2. *God's answer.*—Would God listen to the prayer of Moses? Yes. He "spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." How full of mercy is the Lord! The people had done most wickedly. The place and the time of their sin had made it very great. Yet, at the prayer of His servant He said, "My Presence shall go with thee...Thou hast found grace in My sight." And He spared the Israelites, and went with them! How great is the power of prayer! Even the youngest and feeblest children may pray. The ear of God is open to their cry. We may pray for others, too, as Moses did. How is it that prayer has so much power? Because of—

3. *A greater than Moses.* — This is the Lord Jesus Christ. But for Him, our case would be worse than that of the Israelites. But have we sinned as they did? Not in exactly the same way; yet we have all "erred and strayed" from the right way, and have done evil in God's sight. He is "angry with the wicked." We must have perished, but that Christ bore our punishment, and now—

> "He ever lives above,
> For us to intercede."

Then because of Jesus, who thus pleads for us, we too may "find grace" in the sight of God.

REVISION.—How did God intend to punish the Israelites? Why did He, after that, go with them? How did He receive the prayer of Moses? Repeat God's answer to Moses? Why does God hear our prayer? In whose name must we pray?

Dec. 13.—A Message, and its Answer.

LUKE vii. 22: "Tell John what things ye have seen and heard."

1. *The message of John.*—The wonderful things done by the Lord Jesus were much talked about. The rumour spread far and wide about the wise and kind words He spake, the great miracles He wrought, and especially of His raising to life the widow's son at Nain. The disciples of John the Baptist told all this to their master. He was now in prison where he had been put by the wicked King Herod. They talked of this Teacher who had risen among them. They wondered whether He were that Great One whom the prophets had said should come. John wished his disciples to see and hear Jesus for themselves, and sent them to ask Him who He was. This was wise. Are we in any doubt about Jesus? Is there anything we wish to know about Him? Whom can we so well ask as Himself? He will hear, and will answer, the youngest child who prays to Him.

2. *What the messengers saw.*—They told Jesus their master's message. He did not at once answer. But "that same hour He cured many" who were brought to Him with sore diseases. They flocked to Him from many places in large numbers; some with evil spirits, others with sickness of body; the lame, the feeble, it mattered not, all alike were cured; and to "many who were blind He gave sight." These men had never known such power, or such love, and were full of wonder at all they saw. But why was it done? Not only for the good of those who were healed, but also, to give—

3. *An answer to John.*—Jesus said, "Go, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard." But what could be learned from that? Did it tell John what he wished his disciples to know? Yes; for none but He of whom the prophets spake could do such things. Who, but the Lord, could heal the sick at a word?

or cure the blind? or give life to the dead? And this is written that we might learn about Jesus, and might trust in Him for our salvation. He is the Son of God who came down from heaven; His power and His love still remain for us. No other Saviour can be found; no other is needed.

REVISION.—What was John's message to Jesus? Whom did he send? What did they see? What answer did they bring? Why was this written? How may we be saved?

Dec. 20.—The Good Shepherd.

ISAI. xl. 11: "He shall gather the lambs with His arm."

1. *The Shepherd.* — Have you ever seen a shepherd with his flock on the hills? He guards them with care by day and night. He finds them a place of safety in time of storm and danger, takes them where food may be had; and in going from place to place, he is careful that the young and the weak shall not be hurt by the journey. The little lambs are soon tried, and are timid too, and easily frightened; but the shepherd looks with pity upon them; when they are frightened he takes them in his arms, when they are weary he "carries them in his bosom." He uses his own wisdom and strength for their good.

2. *The Good Shepherd.*—All this may help us to think of the Lord Jesus. Of Him the prophet said, "He shall gather the lambs with His arm." He guards His sheep from harm. He gave *His life* for them; more than this could not be done. But who are His sheep and His lambs? All who trust in Him, who listen to His voice and follow Him, and give Him their hearts. No little lamb is too small to be cared for by the Shepherd; no little child is too young to be one of the lambs of Christ's flock. Is there "a little one" in trouble? Jesus will comfort and help such a one. Is there a dear child who has to go through life without father, or mother, or friend, and who is weary with the journey? Jesus will pity and tenderly care for that one. Is there one who is sad because his heart is evil? or because others try to hinder him from doing right? Even to these the voice of the Good Shepherd calls, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest." Christ knows His sheep, and they know His voice and will follow Him. Do you know the voice of this Good Shepherd? He will lead you safe through life, and will take you to His fold in heaven.

REVISION.—What is a shepherd? What does he do for the sheep? How does he treat the lambs? Who is "the Good Shepherd?" Why is He so called? Who are His lambs? What does our lesson say He will do for them? What does that mean?

Dec. 27.—The Sinner and the Saviour.

LUKE vii. 44: "She hath washed My feet with tears."

1. *A sinner saved.*—Jesus once went, with many others, to a feast, in the house of a Pharisee. As they lay round the table in the manner of that land, a woman entered, and stood at the feet of Jesus behind Him, weeping. She brought with her a box of precious ointment, sweet smelling, and very costly. It was what was there used to anoint the heads of kings, or men whom others wished greatly to honour. Her tears fell fast upon the feet of Jesus, and she wiped them with the long "hairs of her head." Then she kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment she had brought.

2. *How she made known her gratitude.* —Those in the house wondered at what they saw the woman doing. Some were angry; and the Pharisee thought that Jesus could not be a prophet, or He would have known that this woman was a sinner, and would not have let her touch Him. But Jesus knew why she did all this. She had been frowned upon and despised by others, but she knew that Jesus had come to "call sinners to repentance." His good and loving words had brought comfort to her heart, though they had filled her with grief for her sins, and she now felt that He had forgiven her. Need we wonder that she wept for shame at her sins? and for love to her Saviour? She brought the best she could get, and did the most in her power, to show her gratitude and love for Him who had saved her. Jesus was pleased to receive this, and told those about Him that, though her sins were many, they were all forgiven.

3. *The woman's example.*—Like her, we all are sinners. None of us can

despise another for sin, as though we had it not. But Jesus came to save from sin. If we have felt our sin, we shall feel shame and sorrow for it, as she felt. If we love our Saviour, we shall be glad as she was to show our love, and to honour Him, as she did. Is there any way in which a child can do this? The way to do this is to keep His commandments, and to do His will. Think, now, of the many ways in which a child may serve and honour Him.

REVISION.—Where did the woman find Jesus? What did she do to Him? Why did she weep? Why did she honour Jesus? What did the people think? What did Jesus say? How, and why, should we do like her?

THE BIBLE-CLASS.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.—No. XIV.

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."—James v. 13.

NAAMAN OF SYRIA.	2 Kings v. 1, 14.	THE EGYPTIANS.	Exod. xii. 29—33.
SAUL OF TARSUS.	Acts ix. 9, 20.	DORCAS.	Acts ix. 36—41.
MARY AND MARTHA.	John xi. 19, 44.	ELISHA.	2 Kings xiii. 14—19.

W.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE-QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE-READERS.

79. JACOB is the first patriarch who is said to have laid his hands on the head of the persons he was blessing. (Gen. xlviii. 14.)

80. From Ezek. xx. 8 we learn that the Israelites worshipped Egyptian idols before the exodus.

81. The first time a chariot is mentioned is in Gen. xli. 43.

82. In Hosea xii. 4, we are told that Jacob "had power over the angel," and "wept, and made supplication."

83. Before Barnabas became a Christian, he was called "Joses." (Acts iv. 36.)

84. Gen. xxvi. 1—4 records the occasion on which the Lord commanded Isaac not to go to Egypt. W.

SCHOOL BIOGRAPHY.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A SUFFERING SCHOLAR.

THE subject of this sketch was a scholar of mine for some time before my attention was particularly drawn to him. In the latter part of the year 1848, he occasionally met in a week-night select class, conducted by myself; but he did not appear to manifest much interest in what was going on. In the spring of 1849, I missed him from the school, and upon inquiry, found that he had become afflicted with an abscess in the left thigh, and had been taken to the Infirmary. At the first opportunity I went to see him. As soon as I had entered the sick ward in which he lay, and was inquiring for him by name, (his bed being in such a position that I could not see him,) he responded, almost at the top of his voice, "O, yes! Mr. C——; I am here." When I got to his bedside, I found his New Testament open beside him. On my asking the state of his mind, he was in haste to tell me what the Lord had done for him, and proceeded to give a very clear and satisfactory account as to how, in his affliction, he had thought over what he had heard at school; how he had repented of sin, prayed to God for mercy and forgiveness through Christ Jesus, and had been enabled to cast himself in faith on the Atonement, and had found salvation. The happiness of which he spoke he evidently enjoyed; for it was visible in his countenance. I conversed

with him for some time, instructing and encouraging him; and then left with my heart full of joy and gratitude to God for this token of His goodness. I continued to visit him in the Infirmary, and—after his removal thence—at his own home. There his mother told me of the marked change in his temper and manner which had taken place during his absence from home.

His pain was often very great, but he never manifested any impatience; and soon began to tell his mother what God had done for his soul. His parents being very poor, his mother was often absent during the entire day, and he was left alone in a reclining position. On one occasion, when she returned in the evening, he told her what a blessed day he had experienced, saying, he thought before, that God had pardoned his sin; but he had never felt so happy as on that day.

One evening, in the spring of 1850, he rallied a little, and got out sometimes, with the aid of a crutch. I visited him at intervals, during the summer, and always found him in possession of the peace and patience which only trust in God can supply. On one occasion, when my absence had been longer than usual, he seemed rather pained; but said, "My Saviour never leaves me."

Near the close of the year, he was again admitted into the Infirmary, where I found him with the same constant reliance upon the wisdom of God. He once said, "If it had not been for this affliction, I might have been in the world, and without religion, like so many others."

The doctors having again advised his return home, one Sabbath morning shortly after, I saw him, and thought him dying. His sufferings were very severe, and he lay for some time with closed eyes; but now and then uttering such sentences as these: "Blessed Jesus; Thou art with me!" "My pains are very great, but Thou dost help me to bear them." "I know Thou wilt not give me more than I can bear," &c. Having read a chapter and prayed with him, I went to the house of God. As I entered, the Minister was reading Isaiah lv., as the first Lesson, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" How applicable the succeeding words seemed to my poor scholar, when I thought of his illness, his poverty,—"And he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Strange to say, he again rallied, although from this time he was never able to walk, but had to be assisted from his bed to a chair, his affliction preventing him from either sitting upright or lying straight. Towards the close of his illness, he became pitiable to behold; the weight of his swollen legs stretched his body to an unusual length, and it became quite curved from lying so long in one position. Hitherto, he had been able to beguile the lonely hours by reading his Bible, &c.; but now his head became too weak for that. I often visited him at that period; and, while pained and distressed by his sufferings, my faith was strengthened, and my heart was often cheered by witnessing the sustaining power of grace within him. He never murmured or complained to me, although I have since learned that he had, at times, only bread and water to sustain him, until his mother's return in the evening from work. When once she remarked upon the length of his affliction, he replied, "No, mother, it is not long; it never was: God has always been with me, and the time has never seemed long."

On the Sabbath preceding his death, I saw him for the last time; and, although sunk to the last stage of exhaustion, his mind was still at peace. After I had talked with him a little, he requested me to sing,—

"There is a land of pure delight," &c.

I could not sing; but, having read the hymn to him, he burst into tears, and expressed a desire to go to "that happy land." I exhorted him still to be patient; in which he immediately acquiesced, and expressed his fears lest I should think him impatient.

On the morning of his death, he called his mother to him, threw his arms around her neck, thanked her for all her care and trouble on his account, and exhorted her to meet him in heaven. He then tried to sing "Halleluia!" but his strength failed. After a time, he began to repeat

the Lord's Prayer, saying as far as "Thy will be done." This he repeated several times. After a convulsive fit, he seemed to summon all his strength to say, "Bless the Lord!" These were his last words, and shortly after uttering them he fell asleep.

"O may I triumph so,
When all my warfare's past;
And, dying, find my latest foe
Under my feet at last!"

W. R. C.

PORTFOLIO OF GLEANINGS.

"No Room for them in the Inn."

Son of Man, who on this day
In the Bethlehem manger lay,
Wherefore 'neath so poor a shed
Didst Thou rest Thy blessed head?
Could we nothing costlier spare,
For Thy shelter and Thy fare,
Of the goods Thyself had given,
Thus to welcome Thee from heaven?

From the Bethlehem inn to-night
See the windows stream with light;
Crowds across the threshold tread,
Cheerly hail'd to board and bed;
While the greatest, the chief Guest,
Friend the dearest and the best,
Rudely thrust aside must be:
"Lord, there is no room for Thee!"

O, how meekly Thou didst take
Thy sore portion for our sake!
All along Thy path of pain,
Urging the same plea in vain:
Entrance ever—now as then—
Entrance to the souls of men.
Must the answer ever be,
"Lord, there is no room for Thee!"

Son of God, when Thou shalt come,
Heralded by trump of doom,
'Companied with legions bright,
Steeping all the world in light,
Laying bare the secrets dread
Of the wailing quick and dead,—
Late, too late, the cry will be,
"Lord, we must make room for Thee!"

But Thou—O, Thou Friend Divine!—
Knowst that we would fain be Thine;
But the hearts enslaved by sin
Have not strength to let Thee in.
Come Thou in Thy love's great might,
Burst the barriers, take Thy right;
Sanctify us, till we be
Tabernacles meet for Thee.

Son of Man, we trust the love
Thou didst once so dearly prove:
Pray, "Thy kingdom come," nor fear
To behold its wonders here.

Son of God, at Thy right hand,
Where Thy ransom'd brethren stand,
"Lord, our hearts," the cry will be
"Have no room *except* for Thee."

—*Miss Macready.*

The Nobleman's Jester.

A certain nobleman had a fool, who one day so amused him with his wit, that he gave him his cane; and told him, whenever he could find a greater fool than himself, to bring it back to him. In process of time the nobleman came to be very near death; and, sending for his attendant, bade him farewell. "Where is your Lordship going?" asked the fool. "I am going to another world," was the reply. "And when shall you return?" "O, I'm never to return." "No!" said the man; "then has your Lordship made any preparation for the journey?" "Alas! I have not." "Then take back your cane," said the man, "for never could there be other folly so great as that."—*Bishop Hall.*

Key and Lock.

Prayer is the key of the day, and the lock of the night. And we should every day begin and end, bid ourselves "Good-morrow" and "Good-night," with prayer. This will make our labour prosperous, and our rest sweet.

An apt Answer.

A lady once asked a little deaf and dumb girl, by writing on a slate, "What is prayer?" Now this little girl had never said a prayer, for she could not speak; and she had never heard a prayer, for she was quite deaf; yet you will find that she well knew what prayer was. She took the pencil, and wrote on the slate this reply:—"Prayer is the wish of the heart."

EXERCISES ON SCRIPTURE LESSONS.

DECEMBER 6.—Morning Lesson.

MOSES INTERCEDING. — Exodus xxxiii. 1 — 17.

SUMMARY.—God threatens to withdraw His presence, and to send an angel before the people: this fills them with much distress. Moses seeks the Lord at the door of the tabernacle, the "cloudy pillar" descends, and the people worship. The Lord talks with Moses, who entreats Him not to forsake them.

I. Threat of Divine Withdrawal. —V. 1—3. *Depart*, &c.,—a repetition of ch. xxxii. 34. *Which I sware*, &c.—Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 14—18. V. 2. *An angel*, —an ordinary angel, not the "Angel of the covenant" promised, ch. xxiii. 20—23. *Will drive out*, &c.—So God still intended to give them the land He had promised, ch. iii. 8. V. 3. *Flowing with milk*, &c.—Rich in flocks and bees, pasturage and flowers. *I will not go.. lest*, &c.—God says, in effect, "If I dwell *in the midst of thee*, My wrath will be the sooner kindled against thee for thy obstinacy and sin, and I shall quickly and surely smite thee to destruction." *Stiffnecked.* — See Illustration.

II. Mourning.—V. 4—6. *Evil tidings*,—that God would withdraw His presence. *Did put on*, &c.—It is an Eastern custom, in time of mourning, to lay aside all ornaments and comfortable clothing, 2 Sam. xix. 24; Esther iv. i. 4. V. 5. *Therefore now put off..that I may know*, &c.—A command showing that God would respect their penitence and sorrow for the sin they had committed, and would not consume them. V. 6. "From Mount Horeb, onwards, they laid aside the ornaments they had hitherto worn, and assumed the outward appearance of perpetual penitence."

III. The Tabernacle and the Cloud.—V. 7—11. *The tabernacle*,—not properly so, because it was not yet built, ch. xxxv. 10, 11, &c.; but a tent used as a "temporary sanctuary." *Without the camp*,—to symbolize the withdrawal of God from the *midst* of them. *Called it the Tabernacle*,—because God revealed Himself here, and talked with Moses, as at the door of the tabernacle, afterwards. V. 8. *Went out*, —for those devotional exercises which had hitherto been observed within the camp. *Rose up*,—"in reverence to him, as their leader, whom they had lately despised." *Looked after*,—deeply anxious about the result of his interview with God. V. 9. *The cloudy pillar*, — the symbol of the Divine presence. *Talked with Moses*,— not from a distance, nor through any medium, as of angels, but directly, *face to face*, &c., v. 11;—"mouth to mouth," Num. xii. 8. V. 10. *And worshipped*,—feeling truly humbled, and desirous that Moses should succeed with God. V. 11. *Turned again*, &c.— Probably to comfort the people with the hope of pardon and the restoration of the covenant. *A young man*,—not literally, for he was "near sixty years old;" but called so, perhaps, because he was the servant of Moses.

IV. Moses Pleading.—V. 12—17. V. 12, 13. "The meaning is this: If I have found grace in Thy sight, and Thou hast recognised me as Thy servant, and called me to be the leader of this people, do not leave me in uncertainty as to Thine intentions concerning the people; nor as to the angel whom Thou wilt give as a guide to me and the nation:" *that I may know Thee*,—"that is to say, that my finding grace in Thine eyes may become a reality: and, if Thou wilt lead the people up to Canaan, consider that it is Thine own people, to whom Thou must acknowledge Thyself as their God." —*Keil and Delitzsch.* V. 14. *My presence*,—My face. *Rest*,—in the promised land, and especially peace to thee amid the difficulties of thy position. V. 15. *Carry us not*,—let us go no further. V. 16. See Reflection 4. *Separated*,—distinguished. V. 17.

This thing also,—will give this perpetual proof of My favour towards you. *And I know thee by name*,—having called thee to deliver My people, and execute all My will, Isai. xliii. 1.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *Mercy ever mingles with the Divine threatenings.*—In v. 5 there is an intimation that, upon their repentance, the Lord will show them mercy.

2. "*Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.*"—The Israelites put off their ornaments in token of their inward grief; and with us, if there be no fruit or sign in the life, there is not much grief in the soul.

3. *God must be sought unto, if we would find forgiveness with Him.*—Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

4. *The manifest presence of God is the clearest proof that we have found favour with Him.*

5. "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*," v. 14, 17; James v. 16—18.

QUESTIONS.—What did God tell Moses to do? What angel was to go with them? What did the people do? v. 4. What did God threaten? v. 5. Where did Moses pitch the tabernacle? why? What came down to the door of it? How did the Lord talk with Moses? For what did Moses plead? What did God reply? v. 14, 17.

Illustration.—"STIFFNECKED."

See v. 3. "A metaphor from untamed heifers, who draw their necks and shoulders back when they are put under the yoke. Isaiah alludes to this, ch. xlviii. 4; and Jeremiah, ch. v. 5."—*Patrick.*

DECEMBER 6.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

"THE MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE GENTILES."—Romans xv. 8—33.

For repetition, verses 18, 19.

SUMMARY.—St. Paul quotes from the Old Testament to show that both Jews and Gentiles are to be blest by Christ, and prays that they at Rome may be filled with "joy and peace." He declares that his peculiar mission is to the Gentiles, and that he has preached the Gospel where it had not been preached; that this is the reason why he has not been to Rome earlier, but now he promises to visit it after he has taken certain collections to Jerusalem for the relief of the poor saints there.

I. JEWS AND GENTILES ARE TO PRAISE GOD.—V. 8—14. *Of the circumcision*,—i. e., of the Jews to whom His personal ministry was mostly confined, Matt. xv. 24; Acts iii. 25, 26. *For the*—proof and establishment of the *truth*. *To confirm*,—by fulfilling *the promises*; i. e., the prophecies of the Old Testament. V. 9. *And that the Gentiles*,—who were, in God's purpose, to share the blessings of salvation with the Jews. *Glorify*,—by giving thanks and praise. *Written*.—Ps. xviii. 49. *Confess*,—acknowledge *Thee*. V. 10. *Again*.—Deut. xxxii. 43. V. 11. *And again*.—Ps. cxvii. 1. V. 12. *And again*.—Isai. xi. 1, 10. *A root*,—a descendant, springing up from a family sunk in obscurity, as a sprout springs up from the root of a decayed tree, Isai. liii. 2. *Jesse*.—The father of David. *Over the Gentiles*,—as well as the Jews. V. 13. *God of hope*,—inspiring and sustaining blessed, heavenly hope in the souls of otherwise despairing men. What a glorious prayer this is! V. 14. *Am persuaded*,—have the fullest confidence, "not only by the reports of others, but by my own judgment." *Of goodness*,—of a disposition inclining you to charitableness. *All knowledge*,—as to the duties of religion. *To admonish*,—put in mind, counsel with kindness, and yet with effect.

II. PAUL THE MINISTER TO THE GENTILES.—V. 15—21. *Nevertheless*,—notwithstanding my confidence in you. *In some sort*,—a modest manner of speaking; he had not used the tone of authority he might have used: *because*.. *I* am (v. 16) *the Minister*..*to the Gentiles*, so that, though a stranger to you personally, I have authority to speak *boldly*, Eph. iii. 7, 8. *Ministering*,—sacredly, as the priest formerly did in the Temple. *Offering up*, (Margin, "sacrificing,")—presenting to God "as living sacrifices," ch. xii. 1. *Sanctified*,—made pure and holy; not by salt, oil, or frankincense, as under the law, but

by the purifying grace of *the Holy Ghost*. V. 17. *I have therefore*,—because of the effectual and fruitful character of my ministry. *Pertain*,—belong *to God*. V. 18. *I will not dare*,—I have no need to do it, and should be ashamed if I could. *Obedient*,—to the teachings of the Gospel. *By word and deed*,—by preaching, and by the works, or example, of my life. V. 19. *Through mighty*,—the might of *signs*, &c.; miracles which are the proofs of *the power of the Spirit*. *From Jerusalem*, &c.—See Illustration. V. 20. *Strived*,—been ambitious of the honour. *Another man's foundation*,—only going where another had prepared the way, and made the work comparatively easy for me. *But*,—in illustration of the Scripture, Isai. lii. 15.

III. Paul's Service to the Poor Saints.—V. 22—33. *For which cause*,—"being so entirely occupied with this leading business of my life." *Much*.—Margin, "Many ways, or oftentimes." *To you*,—who have already heard the Gospel. V. 23. *No more place*,—no reason for continuing longer *in these parts*, "where Christ has now been preached in every city." *A great desire*.—Ch. i. 9—13. V. 24. *Into Spain*,—where Christ had not been preached. *In my journey*,—intimating that it was not his principal object to visit Rome, but that he would take it in his way. *Somewhat*, &c.—Enjoying a refreshing taste of friendship as I pass by you. V. 25. *To minister*,—to relieve their necessities. V. 26. *It hath pleased*,—they have done it cheerfully, and of their own mind, 2 Cor. viii. 1—4. V. 27. *Their debtors*,—because of the *spiritual things* they had received through them. *In carnal*,—temporal blessings. V. 28. *Have sealed*,—safely delivered, and secured it to them. *Into Spain*,—"such was his design; but it does not appear that he ever went." V. 31. *That do not believe*,—"are disobedient," and will seek my life. *May be accepted*,—"in spite of all their prejudices." V. 32. *That I may come*,—not being imprisoned. *With joy*.—Knowing the relief was gladly and thankfully received.

Reflections.—1. *The salvation of God is for all men; therefore all should join in praise to Him for His mercy*, v. 5, 6.

2. *Hope of heaven brightens as present Christian experience becomes happier*.—If we are now "filled with joy and peace," we shall "abound in hope."

3. *Men clothed with the authority of God have a right to speak "boldly" to the members of His Church; and we should listen to them with meekness*, v. 15.

4. *The office of the Holy Ghost was magnified by St. Paul*, v. 13, 16, 19, 30.—So it should be by us.

5. *Man cannot have a greater honour than to preach Christ where He has not been named before*.—Think of our Missionaries.

6. *Contributions of money are an equitable, but small, return for spiritual blessings*.

7. *The prayers of God's people are very precious to His servants in times of peril*.—Acts xii. 5, 7—17.

Questions.—To whom was Jesus Christ a Minister? What for? For what other purpose? v. 9. Who were to praise God? How is Christ the "Root of Jesse?" Over whom does Christ reign? Of what was St. Paul persuaded? To whom was he a Minister? What did he minister? and how? also to what end? v. 16. Where did Paul preach the Gospel? Why had he never been to Rome? Where did he intend to go? Where before that? What to take? What did he beseech of the Christians at Rome? why?

Illustration.—St. Paul's Circuit.

See v. 19. "Taking Jerusalem as his centre, he had been perpetually enlarging the circle of his travels. In his first missionary journey he had preached in the southern parts of Asia Minor, and the northern parts of Syria: in his second journey, he had visited the Macedonian towns which lay near the shores of the Ægean; and now, on his third progress, he would seem to have penetrated into the mountains of the interior, or even beyond them to the shores of the Adriatic, and 'fully preached the Gospel of Christ round about unto Illyricum.' . . . . A distinction was anciently drawn between *Greek Illyricum*, a district on the south, which was incorporated by the Romans with Macedonia, and formed the coast-line of that province where it touched the Adriatic, and *Barbarous*, or *Roman Illyricum*, which extended towards the head of that gulf, and was under the administration of a separate governor."—*Conybeare and Howson*.

DECEMBER 13.—Morning Lesson.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE SON OF MAN.—Luke vii. 18—35.

For repetition, verses 21—23.

Summary.—John, hearing of the works of Jesus, sends disciples to inquire of Himself concerning His character. In their presence Jesus cures several persons, and bids them tell John what they had seen. After their departure, Jesus speaks of John to the people, and shows how in him is fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi. He upbraids the Pharisees and lawyers for their rejection of John and Himself.

I. The Answer of Jesus to John.—V. 18—23. *Showed*,—informed him. *These things*,—the miracles Jesus did, as v. 11—15. *Saying*,—with this question to ask Him, *Art thou He?*—the Messiah foretold; *Or look we*, &c.?—must we turn a deaf ear to the rumour of Thy fame, and conclude Thou art not He? V. 21. *In that same hour*,—so that John's disciples might see for themselves. *Infirmities*,—lingering diseases. *Plagues*,—"attended with acute pain." V. 22. *Go your way*, &c.,—you have the best evidence I can give you. *To the poor the Gospel*, &c.,—"The greatest mercy of all."—*Wesley*. V. 23. *Not be offended*,—not stumble, or hesitate to receive these proofs of My Messiahship because of My lowliness and poverty.

II. His Testimony to the Mission of John.—V. 24—28. *Were departed*,—immediately afterwards, while the thought of John was fresh in their minds. *What went ye out*, &c.?—"what kind of man did you find in the wilderness of Jordan when you went out in multitudes to see and hear John?" *A reed*, &c.,—an easy, supple man, bending before every wind, yielding to every influence. V. 25. *In soft raiment*,—a man of luxurious life, and effeminate character. *In kings' courts*.—The wilderness, with its exposures, would have been no place for such an one. What John's clothing and food were, we learn from Matt. iii. 4. V. 26. *More than a prophet*.—Because he was the Lord's immediate forerunner, Matt. iii. 3; he saw the person of Christ, and pointed Him out to the people, John i. 29, in fulfilment of Mal. iii. 1, quoted v. 27. V. 28. *A greater*,—in dignity of office and sacredness of work. *In the kingdom of God*,—the dispensation and work of the Gospel. *Greater than he*,—by virtue of his ability to preach the blessings of grace through faith in Christ, as well as the doctrine of repentance.

III. His Reproof of the Jews.—V. 29—35. *And the publicans*,—the outcast, despised tax-gatherers, "among whom John's ministry had been eminently successful." *Justified God*,—"owned His wisdom and mercy in thus calling them to repentance." *Baptism of John*,—unto repentance, Matt. iii. 6, 11. V. 30. *Lawyers*,—scribes, men learned in the law of Moses. *Rejected the counsel*,—frustrated, or made void the gracious purpose of God in sending John. *Being not baptized*,—i. e., the vast body of them, though some came, Matt. iii. 7. V. 32. *Like unto children*,—"so froward and perverse, that no contrivance can be found to please them." See Illustration. V. 33. *Neither eating nor drinking*,—"in a rigorous, austere way, like Elijah," ch. i. 17. *A devil*—"is melancholy, from the influence of an evil spirit." V. 34. *Eating and drinking*,—freely mingling and conversing with men, "without respect of persons." *Glutonous*, &c.,—eating and drinking to excess, and keeping the worst company. V. 35. "*Wisdom* is personified, and by *the children* of wisdom He evidently intends John the Baptist and Himself; whilst the term *justified* is to be taken in its usual sense of 'acquitted from blame.' The sense therefore is, that.. the spirit and conduct of each had declared that the doctrine they taught was 'the wisdom from above.'"—*Watson*.

Reflections.—1. *No evidence is more convincing than that of our own eyesight*.—"Seeing is believing," is a common proverb. John's disciples had heard of, but now they saw for themselves, the miracles wrought by Jesus, and so had the best possible help towards deciding whether he was truly the Messiah.

2. *John's life and teaching were in keeping with the prophecies, and so helped to establish the claims of Jesus*.

3. *It matters little what you do or say to men who are determined not to be convinced.*—Such were the Pharisees, but it was to their own hurt, v. 30.

4. *Goodness or consistency of character is not secured by rigid uniformity of outward associations and conduct.*—John may be severe and Jesus sociable, yet both may act becomingly.

QUESTIONS.—What did John's disciples ask Jesus? How did He answer them? Whom did Jesus say was "blessed?" What did He say of John? Where do they who "wear soft clothing live?" How do they live? Why was John "greater than a prophet?" Why less than a preacher of the Gospel? Among what class was John most successful? Who "rejected the counsel of God?" To what did Jesus "liken" them? What did they say of John? What of Jesus? How did Jesus rebuke them? Who are the "children" of "wisdom?" Who else?

Illustration.—"CHILDREN IN THE MARKET-PLACE."

See v. 32. "He refers here to the plays or sports of children. . . . Children imitate their parents and others, and act over in play, what they see done by others. Among their childish sports, therefore, was probably an imitation of a wedding or festal occasion. . . . . It is not improbable that children also, in play, imitated a mournful funeral procession."—*Barnes.*

DECEMBER 13.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

GOD'S NAME PROCLAIMED.—Exodus xxxiii. 18—23; xxxiv. 1—8.

SUMMARY.—Moses desires to see the glory of God, and the Lord makes His goodness pass before him. By the command of God Moses hews two tables of stone, and carries them up into the Mount, where God again proclaims to him His goodness and truth.

I. TO MOSES "IN A CLIFT OF THE ROCK."—Chap. xxxiii. 18—23. *And he said,*—encouraged to ask for more by the promises made, v. 14, 17. *I beseech Thee.*—He speaks with that devout humility which especially becomes him when asking so great a favour. *Thy glory,*—"what Moses desired to see, as the answer of God clearly shows, must have been something surpassing all former revelations of the glory of Jehovah, (ch. xvi. 7, 10; xxiv. 16, 17,) and even going beyond Jehovah's talking with him 'face to face,' v. 11.. A sight of the glory, or essential LOVE of God, without any figure and without a veil." *All my goodness.*—Moses had seen the terrible majesty of God on Mount Sinai, ch. xix. 16—25; and His wrath against the people, ch. xxxii. 7—11; now he is to be cheered by a sight of the "milder glories" of the Divine character. V. 19. *Pass before thee, and I will proclaim,* &c.—The promise and intimation of the glory came first, v. 21—23; the sight and proclamation came afterwards on the Mount, ch. xxxiv. 6, 7. *To whom I will..on whom I will,*—"expressing the reason why Moses' request was granted; viz., that it was an act of unconditional grace and compassion on the part of God, to which no man, not even Moses, could lay any just claim," see Rom. ix. 15. V. 20. *My face,*—My unveiled spiritual glory. *And live,*—the sight would overwhelm: I should prove "a consuming fire" to thee. V. 21. *A place by Me..a rock,*—probably the rock in Horeb, where the Lord had formerly appeared to Moses, ch. xvii. 6. V. 22. *In a clift,*—perhaps one of the clefts made in the rock when God brought water out of it, Ps. lxxviii. 15. *With My hand,* &c., and v. 23. See Illustration.

II. TO MOSES ON THE MOUNT.—Ch. xxxiv. 1—8. *Like unto the first.*—Ch. xxxi. 18; xxxii. 15, 16, 19. *I will write,* &c.—As a sign and seal that My covenant with Israel is restored. *The first tables,*—which God Himself prepared. V. 2. *Present thyself.*—A stately form of speech, indicating to Moses that he should come up with an impressive sense of the Divine condescension and grace. V. 3. Compare ch. xix. 12, 13, 21—25. This command was intended to beget in the people a greater awe of God. V. 4. *Early,*—being prompt in his obedience to the Divine command. V. 5. *In the cloud,*—in which He had been wont to appear. V. 6, 7. *And proclaimed,*—in solemn state and form. *The* name,—expressive of the most hidden nature and sublime glory of God: "Jehovah, Jehovah God," &c. "This sermon on the name of the Lord," as Luther calls it, "proclaimed that 'God is love;' but that kind of love in which mercy, grace,

long-suffering, goodness, and truth are united with holiness and justice." *Abundant..keeping mercy*, &c., — denoting "the immense treasures of the Divine bounty." *Iniquity*, &c.,—three words to signify all sorts of offences, subtle and flagrant. *Will by no means clear*, &c.—"All this mercy and grace consist with the most entire hatred of moral evil, and the most absolute determination to punish it." *The iniquity*,—sin of the soul, idolatry of the heart. *To the fourth*,—the utmost that any man can live to see of his seed. V. 8. *Made haste*, —eager to acknowledge the marvellous condescension toward him, and to reverence devoutly the glorious and gracious God who had so far unfolded to him the mystery of the wondrous name JEHOVAH.

REFLECTIONS.—1. *The full glory of God is seen in the pure, perfect blending of the separate glories of the Divine character:* as holiness with goodness, justice with grace, truth with condescension, &c.— But we love to think of His mercy:

"The Lord, the mighty God, Thou art;
But let me rather prove
That name in-spoken to my heart,
That favourite name of Love."
Hymn 249.

2. *We have "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*—John i. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Heb. i. 3; Hymn 283.

3. *Every man, truly penitent for sin, may pray for the mercy of God with confident hope.*—Ch. xxxiv. 6, 7; Hymn 144, v. 5—9.

4. *A prayerless, wicked man may live to see the terrible consequences of his iniquity in the social adversity or personal suffering of his children.*

QUESTIONS.—What did Moses desire to see? What did God promise? Did God grant it as a great favour? What did God say about seeing His face? Where was Moses to stand? What did God say He would do? What was Moses to see? What did the Lord command Moses? How did He descend? What did He proclaim Himself to be? What else? What did Moses do?

Illustration.—MOSES' VISION OF GOD.

See ch. xxxiii. 20—23. "As our bodily eye is dazzled, and its power of vision destroyed, by looking directly at the brightness of the sun, so would our whole nature be destroyed by an unveiled sight of the brilliancy of the glory of God. . . . The manifested glory of the Lord would so surely be followed by the destruction of man, that even Moses needed to be protected before it. . . . He said He would cover him with His hand, i.e., with His protecting power, and only take away His hand when He had gone by, that he might see His back, because His face could not be seen. The back, as contrasted with the face, signifies the reflection of the glory of God that had just passed by. . . . As the inward nature of man manifests itself in his face, and the sight of His back gives only an imperfect and outward view of him, so Moses saw only the back and not the face of Jehovah."—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

DECEMBER 20.—MORNING LESSON.

GOOD TIDINGS.—Isaiah xl. 1—12.

For repetition, verses 4, 5.

SUMMARY.—The prophet comfortingly foretells the times of the Gospel: he speaks of the office of John the Baptist; of the everlasting word of grace in contrast with the frailty of man; of the joy of Zion when she beholds her King, and of the blended strength and gentleness of the Saviour.

I. COMFORT.—V. 1, 2. *Comfort ye.*— "The prophet addresses himself to God's messengers, whose office it was to publish the glad tidings of peace and salvation," ch. lii. 7. *My people*,—those "waiting for the Consolation of Israel," Luke ii. 25. V. 2. *Comfortably*, (Margin, "to the heart,") —"in the most pleasant and winning manner." *Warfare*, (Margin, "appointed time,")—i. e., of hardship and suffering *is accomplished*, filled up, and

so ended. *Pardoned,*—through the blood of Christ, which had efficacy before it was actually shed. *Double,* &c.,—"in proportion to God's usual severity in punishing men's sins," Jer. xvi. 18; xvii. 18; Rev. xviii. 6; or, as some think, "blessings double to the punishment" she had endured, are meant to be foretold, ch. lxi. 7.

II. Preparation.—V. 3—5. *The voice of him,* &c.—The allusion is to the custom of Eastern monarchs who sent heralds before them to make the roads easy and commodious for their passage, and to prepare people to expect their approach. John the Baptist quoted this as a prophecy of himself, John i. 23. *The Lord,*—Jesus Christ, the Messiah of God. *The desert,*—alluding to the desert of Sinai, through which the Israelites passed from Egypt to Canaan. V. 4. *Every valley,* &c.—The language is highly figurative; see it explained and applied, Matt. iii. 2—10; Luke i. 17. See Illustration. V. 5. *The glory of the Lord.*—"His glorious power, mercy, and faithfulness in the return of the Jews from Babylon; or, alluding to Christ, the brightness of His glory, or the wonderful work of man's redemption, in which is the most transcendent display of the Divine attributes." *All flesh,*—Jews and Gentiles: all nations shall share in the blessings of Messiah's reign. *The mouth of the Lord,*—"by the mouth of His holy prophets," Luke i. 70; 2 Peter iii. 2.

III. The Perishable and Imperishable.—V. 6—8. *The voice,*—of God. *He,*—i. e., the prophet, or messenger. *What?*—I wait to receive the word from Thee. *All flesh,*—all men in themselves, and all earthly powers in which they are prone to trust. *Grass,*—tender, fading, easily destroyed, Matt. vi. 30. *Goodliness,*—beauty, or glory. V. 7. *Because the spirit,* &c.—"As winds and storms deface the beauty of the grass and flowers, so the breath of God blasts the counsels of men," and takes away their life, Ps. ciii. 15, 16; civ. 29. *Surely,*—beyond a doubt it is true. V. 8. *But the word,*—the prophecies, the gracious purposes of God concerning the restoration of the Jews, and the salvation of universal man, 1 Peter i. 24, 25.

IV. Zion and her King.—V. 9—11. *O Zion,* &c.—The reading in the Margin is the more correct. *Good tidings,*—of grace and salvation, Luke ii. 10, 11. *Get thee up,* &c.—Proclamations used to be made from the top of some high hill, and with a loud voice, that they might be heard a long way off, Judges ix. 7; 2 Chron. xiii. 4. *Be not afraid,*—as those who doubt the truth of what they declare. *Your God,*—your Redeemer and King. V. 10. *With strong,*—Margin, "against the strong." *His arm.*—His own strength shall establish the kingdom of Messiah without the aid of worldly might or wisdom. *His reward,*—"the recompense of His work," is *before Him;* "alluding to the Eastern purse, carried in front, fastened to the girdle." V. 11. *His flock,*—the called, and chosen, and faithful of every age and condition. *Like a shepherd,*—with the same watchfulness, affection, and tender concern for their varying conditions of life, and for their various weaknesses and wants.

Reflections.—1. "*He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever,*" Ps. ciii. 9.—The pious Jews were always comforted under national calamities by looking forward to the glorious days of the Messiah.

2. *As John prepared the way of Jesus, so we should prepare our hearts to receive Him.*

3. *The prophecies will not be fulfilled till all nations have heard the joyful news, and seen the glorious light, of the Gospel.*—We should labour, and pray, and wait for what is spoken, v. 5.

4. *What a touching emblem of mortality is grass!*—You have seen it fall before the scythe of the mower: how soon its freshness and beauty are gone,—dried up by the sun! So soon does our life fade away. Hymn 46.

5. *God's Word will stand for ever, because God's own Arm will fulfil and sustain it,* v. 5, 8, 10.

6. *What a comfort it is to know that the mighty Saviour is so merciful and compassionate,* v. 11.—John x. 11; Heb. ii. 10, 17, 18.

Questions.—Who were to comfort God's people? how? Of whom does v. 3 speak? How did he "prepare the way of the Lord?" Why are we sure that the former part of v. 5 will be fulfilled? To what is man likened? why? Will the Word of God perish? why not? What was the custom when a proclamation was made? How will the Redeemer come? v. 10. Why is Christ "like a shepherd?"

Illustration.—PREPARING THE WAY.

See v. 3, 4. "Diodorus Siculus states, that when Semiramis marched into Media and Persia, she ordered precipices, and even mountains, to be cut down, and hollow places to be filled up with earth, and, at a vast expense, made the ways level and plain, and in low places she raised mounds, on which she built monuments, and even cities. On her march to Ecbatane she cut down the craggy precipices, and filled up the deep hollows of the mountain Zarkeum; and, at a great expense, made a plain, open road, afterwards known by the name of 'the road of Semiramis.' This fact shows a beauty in the prophetic declaration."

DECEMBER 20.—AFTERNOON LESSON.

THE SHEPHERDS.—Luke ii. 1—20.

SUMMARY.—A decree to enrol the people having been made by the Emperor, Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem to be enrolled: while they are there, Jesus is born. An angel appears to the shepherds, and announces the event to them; whereupon numbers of angels appear, singing, "Glory to God." Afterwards the shepherds go to Bethlehem, and find it even as the angel had said; they talk of it to the people, and return, praising God.

I. THE TAXING AND THE BIRTH.—V. 1—7. *In those days,*—"a little after the birth of John, and just before the birth of our Lord." *A decree,*—an imperial command. *Augustus,*—the nephew of Julius Cæsar. *All the world,*—all the Roman empire, or the whole land of Judæa. *Taxed,* (Margin, "enrolled,")—each person's name was placed on a register or list, with a statement of his employment, property, &c., that he might be taxed according to what he was and possessed. V. 2. *Was first made,* &c.—*Cyrenius was* not *governor of Syria* at the time of this enrolment, but was governor at the time of the actual levying of the tax, which did not take place till ten or twelve years after, Acts v. 37. *Syria,*—of which Judæa was now a province. V. 3. *His own city,*—to which his family formerly belonged. V. 4. *The city of David,*—1 Sam. xvi. 1, 4. *Lineage,*—i.e., descended from David, as his father or ancestor. V. 6. *And so it was while they were there,*—in striking fulfilment of prophecy, Micah v. 2; John vii. 42. V. 7. *Swaddling clothes,*—bands, or blankets, that confined the limbs closely. *A manger.*—Not as we understand the word, but the place where "the whole caravan of camels, horses, and people" lodged when the *inn* was full.

II. THE NEWS AND THE REJOICING.—V. 8—14. *The same country,*—on the hills round about Bethlehem. *Abiding,*—out of doors with their flocks. *Keeping watch,*—Margin, "the night-watches." *Over their flock,*—lest they should stray, or be stolen; the country was open, not fenced in, like our fields. V. 9. "This celestial messenger appeared suddenly and at once, as the word imports, and was made visible, no doubt, by that *glory of the Lord* which *shone round about them.*—By 'the glory of the Lord,' we understand a streaming forth from the Divine Shechinah, the light in which the special presence of God has ever been enshrined."—*Watson.* V. 10. *Fear not: for, behold.*—How he gradually prepares them to receive the message: first soothing their fears, then challenging their attention. V. 11. *Unto you,*—"shepherds; Israel; mankind." *This day.*—We keep the twenty-fifth of December in commemoration; but the precise day of the birth of Jesus is not known. *A Saviour.*—Matt. i. 21. *Christ,*—the Anointed One of God. *The Lord.*—Divine in character, Matt. i. 23. V. 12. *A sign,*—by which you shall prove the reality of this vision, and the truth of this declaration. V. 13. *A multitude,*—made visible by the same light of the Divine glory. V. 14. *In the highest,*—heavens: "let all the angelic legions resound His praises. For, with the Redeemer's birth, peace and all kinds of happiness come down to dwell on earth; yea, the overflowings of Divine good-will and favour are now exercised toward men."—*Wesley.*

III. THE SEARCH AND THE WONDERING.—V. 15—20. *As the angels,* &c.—Immediately. *The shepherds.*—See Margin. *Let us now go,*—and see if the sign will be fulfilled. V. 16. *With haste,*—most anxious to learn the truth. V. 17. *Had seen,*—and so could speak with

confidence. *Told them*,—by the angel first, and then by Joseph and Mary, confirming what the angel had said. V. 18. *Wondered*,—at the marvellous agreement of the two accounts, and the glorious event announced. V. 19. *These things*,—which the shepherds had told her. *Pondered*,—balanced, or weighed, them in her mind with what she had been told before, Ch. i. 31—35, 42—44. V. 20. *Returned*,—to their flocks, possibly echoing the very song of the angels, v. 14.

REFLECTIONS. — 1. *The time of the Saviour's birth was in fulfilment of the prediction of Jacob*, Gen. xlix. 10.—This first taxing was a strong indication that the sceptre was departing from Judah, and in a few years it actually did pass away.

2. *In what lowly circumstances was the Saviour born!*—It does not appear that Joseph was too poor to purchase the necessary accommodation, but that "there was no room for them in the inn;" and so Christ was born in the stall, or courtyard, like the child of the humblest servant, Phil. ii. 7.

3. *What a striking illustration we have here of the truth that "to the poor the Gospel is preached."* — Not to King Herod, or the chief priests, or the wise and wealthy; but to the simple shepherds do the angels announce the "good tidings of great joy."

4. *Angels praise God for His love to man; and they assist in the work of grace and salvation*, Heb. i. 14.

5. *It is well to cherish the spirit of confidence, when what Revelation declares is astonishing and almost incredible.* — The shepherds were overwhelmed at first; yet, as they went towards Bethlehem, they spoke confidently of "this thing which is come to pass."

6. *Angels began the song of praise, the shepherds caught its strains, and ultimately angels and men will sing it in grand chorus.*—Rev. xi. 15—17.

QUESTIONS.—What is meant by "this taxing?" When was it first made? When was the tax enforced? Why was Bethlehem called "the city of David?" How was Joseph of the "lineage" of David? What prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem? What appeared to the shepherds? Who spoke to them? What did he say? What happened immediately after? What did the shepherds say to one another? What did they find at Bethlehem? What did they do? What is said of Mary?

Illustrations.—I. "A MANGER."

See v. 7. "The word, in classical Greek, undoubtedly means a manger, crib, or feeding trough; but, according to Schleusner, its real signification in the New Testament is the open courtyard, attached to the inn, or khan, and enclosed by a rough fence of stones, wattle, and other slight material, into which the cattle would be shut at night, and where the poorer travellers might unpack their animals, and take up their lodging, when they were, either by want of room or want of means, excluded from the house."—*Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible."*

II. EASTERN FLOCKS.

See v. 8. "I saw many flocks of sheep and goats on these same hills to-day, and was vividly reminded of those passages in Bible history in which the flocks and the shepherds of Bethlehem figure with so much interest, as in David's youth, and at the birth of Jesus."—*The Land and the Book.*

DECEMBER 27. — MORNING LESSON.

RANSOM FROM DEATH.—Psalm xlix.

SUMMARY. —This Psalm begins by inviting particular attention to what is about to be said, as something of great importance. It then teaches that neither wealth nor wisdom can save man from death, but that God only can "redeem us from the power of the grave;" and concludes by teaching that man's earthly glory is but of short duration.

I. THE VOICE OF WISDOM. — V. 1—4. *All inhabitants of the world*,—for it is something which concerns man everywhere, and in every condition of life. V. 2. *Low and high*,—"common men and lords." V. 3. *Of wisdom.. of understanding.*—What I teach will be the truest "wisdom," because I have seriously weighed those things which serve to give a clear and full "understanding" of what will secure man's

lasting happiness. V. 4. *Incline mine ear*,—to listen to what is told me by Him whose voice I am. *A parable.*—A favourite method of conveying instruction in the East. *My dark saying*,—my "riddle, a discourse of difficult comprehension, of deep sense." *Upon the harp*,—accompanying my sayings with suitable, soothing music.

II. Precious Redemption.—V. 5—15. *Of evil*,—adversity. *Of my heels*,—properly, of those who supplant me, and would tread me down in the dust. V. 6. *Boast themselves*,—as though money were an impregnable wall of protection to them, and a power by which they could crush and ruin those who have it not. V. 7. *By any means*,—by the most skilful use of medicine, &c., or the most bountiful bribe to the king of terrors. *His brother*,—his dearest and best friend, for whose life he would give his own. *To God a ransom*,—an atonement, or price, to induce Him to set aside the stern decree, Gen. iii. 19. Compare Exod. xxxii. 29, 30. V. 8. *Redemption*,—or ransom, is too precious to be bought with money, so that he must put off for ever the idea of effecting it thus. V. 10. *For he seeth*,—even *wise men die*, wisdom and wealth combined cannot save them; how certainly, then, must the "fools and the senseless ones perish," *and leave*, &c. V. 11. *Their inward thought is*,—they flatter themselves with the delusion. *After their own names*,—hoping at least that these will be perpetuated, and their fame celebrated over the countries for many generations. V. 12. "But *man* remains not in honour; *he is like the beasts*, which, without any apprehension, are overtaken by death," and are no sooner dead than forgotten. V. 13. *Posterity*,—children likeminded with themselves. *Approve*, &c.—See Margin. V. 14. *Like sheep*, &c.—"Like sheep driven to the slaughter, they must become the prey of death, and go in crowds to the grave; and when the just, whom they insulted, shall triumph over them in the glorious dawn of the resurrection, their faded beauty shall moulder away in the silent habitation of the grave."—*Travell.* V. 15. *God will redeem*, &c.—"I shall have a resurrection from the dead, and an entrance into His glory." *Receive*,—or take me to Himself.

III. Short-lived Glory.—V. 16—20. *Afraid*,—alluding to the question in v. 5. *Increased*,—has become great. V. 17. *His glory*,—must fade away with his life. V. 18. See Illustration. *Doest well to thyself*,—by commanding the bounties of Providence, and growing rich and great. V. 19. *Of his fathers*,—"his predecessors in wickedness." *Never see light*,—the light of such glory as they rejoiced in on earth, nor the light of that glorious life to which God will raise His redeemed ones, v. 15. V. 20. *And understandeth not*,—how short his honour is! See Hymn 578, v. 4.

Reflections.—1. *The same voice may bring consolation to some men, and warning to others.*—Here the words of the Psalmist are full of cutting rebuke to the ungodly rich, but are quite as full of comfort to the godly poor.

2. "*All men think all men mortal but themselves*," *especially when they have wealth at command.*—Strange as it may seem, riches infatuate men with the notion that *they* are not likely soon to die, Luke xii. 16—19.

3. "*Trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God*," 1 Tim. vi. 17.—He only can give us "glory, honour, immortality, eternal life."

4. *How poor is the pride of this life in prospect of the grave!*—Nothing better than the glory of grass, Isai. xl. 6—8.

5. "*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*," Ps. xc. 12.—This should be our constant prayer.

Questions.—To whom does the Psalmist call? Who used many parables in teaching? What is meant by the "iniquity of my heels?" What cannot money do for us? Can we escape death by giving God a ransom? What is said of redemption in v. 8? With what do men of property sometimes flatter themselves? How are they "laid in the grave?" Who will redeem the just? Why are we not to fear rich men? Can worldly glory go with us into eternity?

Illustration.—"He blessed his soul."

See v. 18. "The reason is given why God does not permit the glory of the wicked to follow him; why it comes to so sudden and complete an end. His whole life was set on enjoyment; he has already enjoyed enough, already has he treated himself luxuriously

enough, and he cannot complain if he should now come to want. We may compare Luke xvi. 25, and Luke xii. 19. In the second member (of v. 18), the ungodly rich man is addressed, and the irony thereby made more cutting: thou dost indeed treat thyself so kindly, that men generally praise thee as a virtuoso, as a hero in wine-bibbing, &c. Compare Isai. v. 22."—*Keil and Delitzsch.*

DECEMBER 27.—Afternoon Lesson.

FORGIVENESS AND LOVE.—Luke vii. 36—50.

(*For repetition*, verses 44—48.)

Summary.—A suitable subject for the last Lesson of the year! Jesus enters into Simon's house to eat; a woman follows, and washes His feet with her tears, wiping "them with the hairs of her head;" Simon is displeased with this, but Jesus gives him the parable of the two debtors, and teaches him that the woman had showed more kindness to Him than he himself had; and that where much is forgiven, much love is inspired. He forgives the woman's sins, and sends her away in peace.

I. Kindness and Displeasure.—V. 36—39. *One of the Pharisees,*—against whom, as a class, He had just been speaking. *And he went,*—although the purpose of the invitation was questionable, and He was not treated, on entering, with proper courtesy and respect. *Sat down,*—not as we do, but reclined on a couch, so that His feet were behind Him, v. 38. V. 37. *In the city,*—Nain, v. 11: well known there as a *sinner*, a woman of loose morals and life. *Alabaster-box,*—"a common name for all vessels containing unguents, or scents." V. 38. See Illustration I. V. 39. *He spake within himself,*—reasoned in his mind, not liking to speak out. *Would have known*, &c.—Because Jesus did not drive the woman from Him, Simon concluded He did not know her character. *That toucheth Him.*—The Pharisees dreaded the touch of one whom they thought wicked.

II. The Parable of the Two Debtors.—V. 40—43. *Answering,*—to his inward thoughts, knowing well what they were. *I have somewhat*, &c.—As Simon had not expressed his unfavourable opinion of Him, Jesus begins the conversation with a formal and courteous preface. *Say on,*—I am ready to listen. V. 41. *A certain creditor,*—"a man who had lent money, or sold property, the payment for which was yet due." *Five hundred pence,*—about £15 12*s.* 6*d.* *Fifty,*—about £1 11*s.* 3*d.* V. 42. *Frankly forgave,*—generously freed them from all legal obligation to pay. V. 43. *I suppose*, &c.—It is but natural that the one who had most forgiven should be most thankful. *Rightly judged.*—It is a correct and sound conclusion.

III. The Application of It.—V. 44—50. *Turned to the woman.*—An act full of significance, which must have taught the Pharisee, at once, the use he meant to make of the parable. *Seest thou,*—I know her character; dost thou, knowing it also, see what she hath done? *Thou gavest Me no water*, &c.—"It was customary with the Jews to show respect and kindness to their welcome guests, by saluting them with a kiss, by washing their feet, and anointing their heads with oil, or some fine ointment."—*Wesley. But this woman,*—who was under no such obligation as thou wert; and whom thou dost despise. V. 46. *Anointed My feet,*—not presuming, in her lowliness, to touch My head. V. 47. *Which are many,*—in thy judgment especially. *For she loved much.*—Her many sins having been forgiven, therefore her heart was full of thankfulness and love, of which she has now given good practical proof. *To whom little.... loveth little.*—He who thinks himself less of a sinner than others, will feel himself under less obligation, either to love or to prove his love by acts. V. 48. *He said unto her,*—in their presence, what He had said to her before. V. 49. *Who is this?*—What right or power has He? V. 50. *Thy faith*, &c.—Faith is the condition of forgiveness, (Mark xvi. 16,) love is the consequence of it.

Reflections.—1. *An act of kindness*

should always be appreciated, whoever may be the doer of it.—This woman's kindness shines all the more because of the character she had previously borne.

2. *If we have doubts or scruples, it is better to express them, than keep them in our hearts to brood over.*—When people foster suspicion, they often wish what they suspect to be true; of this Simon is an example, v. 39.

3. *That Christ could read Simon's thoughts is a proof that He was God.*

4. *It is possible for us to despise others, when, in truth, they are patterns of goodness to us.*—Simon looked with haughty contempt on this woman; yet what she did to Christ was an example of gratitude and propriety worthy of Simon's imitation.

5. *Forgiveness of sins comes to us through the pure mercy and grace of God.*—Like the two debtors, we have "nothing to pay." What a comfort to us that God "delighteth in mercy."

6. *Our love to God is in proportion to our sense of His love to us*, v. 47.—If we think we are not very great sinners, and that, therefore, God's love to us is not abounding, we shall love Him little; but if, with St. Paul, we call ourselves the "chief of sinners," and know that our many sins are forgiven, then we shall love Him with "pure hearts fervently." Hymn 188, v. 6.

7. *Actions are more the voice of our love to God than words.*—This woman spoke not; but her deeds spoke for her, and declared her love to the Saviour.

QUESTIONS.—Who invited Jesus to eat? Did He go? How did He sit down? Who followed Him? What did she do? Did this please the Pharisee? What did he think about Christ? How did Jesus answer him? How much did each of the debtors owe? Which of them should love most? How did Jesus apply this? What did He say of the woman? what of Simon? What did He say to Simon? v. 47. What to the woman? How did He send her away?

Illustrations.—I. THE WOMAN ANOINTING JESUS.

See v. 38. "The whole picture is beautifully drawn. As our Lord was reclining, in the Jewish manner, upon the couch at table, His feet would be stretched out behind, with sandals off. Hence the woman is said to have 'stood at His feet behind.' She was 'weeping,' having been probably touched by His discourses on some occasion, and brought into a state of true penitence. The washing of the feet with tears, wiping them with the hair of the head, kissing them, and anointing them, were all marks of the profoundest veneration. Washing the feet always preceded anointing. To this day, among the Arabs, when the master of a family has welcomed a stranger, he washes his feet."—*Richard Watson.*

II. "HE REDEEMED ME!"

See v. 47. The tears of a slave-girl, just going to be put up for sale, drew the notice of a gentleman as he passed through the auction-mart of a Southern slave State. The other slaves of the same group, standing in a line for sale like herself, did not seem to care about it, while each knock of the hammer made her shake. The kind man stopped to ask why she alone wept, and was told that the others were used to such things, and might be glad of a change from the hard, harsh home they had come from; but that she had been brought up with much care by a good owner, and she was terrified to think who might buy her. "Her price?" the stranger asked. He thought a little, when he heard the great ransom; but paid it down. Yet no joy came to the poor slave's face when he told her she was free. She had been born a slave, and knew not what freedom meant. Her tears fell fast on the signed parchment, which her deliverer brought to prove that she was no longer in bondage. She only looked at him with fear. At last he got ready to go his way; and, as he told her what she must do when he was gone, it began to dawn on her mind what freedom was. With the first breath she said, "I will follow him, I will follow him; I will serve him all my days;" and to every reason against it, she only cried, "He redeemed me! he redeemed me! he redeemed me!" When strangers used to visit that master's house, and noticed, as all did, the loving, constant service of the glad-hearted girl, and asked her why she was so eager with unbidden service, night by night, and day by day, she had but one answer, and she loved to give it, "He redeemed me! he redeemed me! he redeemed me!"

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